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# LETTERS

OF

# HORACE WALPOLE,

## EARL OF ORFORD,

TO

# SIR HORACE MANN,

HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S RESIDENT AT THE COURT OF FLORENCE, FROM 1760 to 1785.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS.

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CONCLUDING SERIES.

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# LETTERS

FROM

# THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

# SIR HORACE MANN.

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## LETTER CXXVI.

Arlington Street, August 24, 1768.

THE idle talk of nothing but the King of Denmark; and the wise, of Sir Jeffery Amherst. Princess Amelia made a superb ball, firework, and supper, for the former last Friday, at her villa, Gunnersbury, at which I was. I do not tell you the particulars, because I think all those things are very much alike, and differ but in a few dishes or a few crackers, more or less. The poor little king is fatigued to death, and has got the belly-ache. He was to have set out on Monday to hear bad Latin verses at Cambridge, and to see the races at York, but is confined at St. James's.

Sir Jeffery, the newest saint in the Martyrology, has acted a little too like a saint. When he found his resignation gave great uneasiness to the Court, and that they were desirous of pacifying him, he made

his bill and asked for an English peerage, an American one, if any should be made, and a grant of the coal-mines at Quebec, which may produce nobody knows what, twenty, thirty thousand pounds a-year. The Duke of Grafton told him that the King had been so teased for peerages, that his Majesty had forbidden him to mention any more requests of that sort; and, for the coal-mines, I do not believe that they are frightened enough to make him a present of such a royalty—so at present he remains without his regiment or his disinterestedness. I am sorry your brother knight demanded all these *tria juncta in uno*. Adieu!

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## LETTER CXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 22, 1768.

I AM just returned hither from an expedition of visits and curiosity into Warwickshire, Yorkshire, and other counties. I stayed but one night in town, and could see nobody that could inform me whether Sir John Dick and your cap and feathers are set out, but I conclude so, and hope the first news from Florence will be a paragraph in the Gazette with an account of the Great Duke investing you. The black infants* I found were embarked, and I hope will have a prosperous voyage.

I can tell you nothing but what you will see in the papers, of the King of Denmark hurrying from one corner of England to the other, without seeing any-

* The little black dogs Mr. Walpole had procured for Sir Horace Mann to present to the Grand Duchess of Tuscany.—ED.

thing distinctly, fatiguing himself, breaking his chaise, going tired to bed in inns, and getting up to show himself to the mob at the window. I believe that he is a very silly lad, but the mob adore him, though he has neither done nor said anything worth repeating; but he gives them an opportunity of getting together, of staring, and of making foolish observations. Then the newspapers talk their own language, and call him *a great personage;* and a great personage that comes so often in their way, seems almost one of themselves raised to the throne. At the play of the "Provoked Wife," he clapped whenever there was a sentence against matrimony; a very civil proceeding, when his wife is an English princess! The other great personage has at last given him a ball; my Lord Mayor gives him another to-morrow, and he himself is to give a masquerade to all the world at Ranelagh. He asked the King's leave, who said he could refuse nothing to him; the bishops will call this *giving an earthquake;* but if they would come when bishops call, the Bishop of Rome would have fetched forty by this time. Our right reverend fathers have made but a bad choice of their weapon in such a cold damp climate; and yet they were in the right to fix on a sin that they cannot commit themselves. The little king has sent five hundred tickets into the city; I don't know how many to Oxford, and to everybody that has banqueted him. Between him and Sir Jeffery Amherst, poor Wilkes is entirely forgotten: but nobody should complain, for we take care to wear every subject threadbare.

The great war* between the Duke of Portland and Sir James Lowther is said to be compromised: it is certain that the latter is to be a viscount, which looks like his giving up the elections contested between them.

I have had such another misfortune as I had last year in poor Lady Suffolk. My Lady Hervey,† one of my great friends, died in my absence. She is a great loss to several persons; her house was one of the most agreeable in London; and her own friendliness, good breeding, and amiable temper, had attached all that knew her. Her sufferings, with the gout and rheumatism, were terrible, and yet never could affect her patience, or divert her attention to her friends.

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## LETTER CXXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 24, 1768.

I HAVE been confined these three weeks with the gout in both feet, and am still lying upon my couch; yet I must oblige myself to write you a few lines, as the resignation of Lord Chatham will have excited your curiosity. In truth, I am little able to satisfy it; for besides having entirely bidden adieu to politics, I am here, ten miles from town, which is a thousand miles from truth. To the King, I am told Lord

* An election contest. Sir James was not created a Peer at that time.

† Mary Lepelle, widow of John Lord Hervey, eldest son of the first Earl of Bristol, and mother of the three succeeding earls, George-William, Augustus, and Frederic.

Chatham pleaded want of health, and despair of it: but to the Duke of Grafton he complained of the treatment of Sir Jeffery Amherst, and the intended removal of Lord Shelburne—the last, an unwise measure of the last accession to the Administration. I do not see why want of health should have dictated this step more just now than at any moment for this last year. It being timed too at the eve of the Parliament has a suspicious look. As I have always doubted of the reality of his disorder, this proceeding does not abate my suspicion, yet there is in this conduct as in all his preceding, something unaccountable. No reconciliation seems to have taken place with his family: he is as extravagantly profuse as ever, and I believe almost as much distressed. Lord Shelburne protested that he had not received the slightest intimation of Lord Chatham's intention, and yet has since resigned himself. The common report, for I really know nothing of the matter, is, that this nail started will not unpeg the Administration. Lord Rochford is Secretary of State, but Lord Weymouth goes into Lord Shelburne's province. Who is to be Privy Seal I do not know.

We have rumours here that the rebuffs in Corsica have shaken the Duke of Choiseul's credit considerably, which tottered before by the King's apprehension of that invasion producing a war. Our newspapers have even disgraced the duke, and given him the Duke of Nivernois for successor; I do not wish them a more superficial minister than the latter. He is a namby-

pamby kind of pedant, with a peevish *petite santé*, and much more fit to preside over one of your foolish Italian academies than to manage the affairs of a great kingdom.

Adieu! I write in such an uneasy posture that you will excuse my saying no more.

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## LETTER CXXIX.

Arlington Street, Nov. 3, 1768.

I WISH you joy on the consummation of your wishes, and am pleased with the honours showered on you. Mr. Conway did receive your letter, and is happy to have contributed to your satisfaction.

Lord Chatham, if one may judge by symptoms, is not only peaceable, but has reason to be pleased. The Privy Seal is given to his friend Lord Bristol,* and not only the Chancellor,† but Mr. James Grenville remain in place; a complexion of circumstances that places Lord Shelburne in an awkward situation. Till to-day it was even believed that the latter's friend, Colonel Barré, would retain his place, but to-day I hear that he will resign it. Lord Harcourt is likely to go ambassador to Paris, and they say Lord Charles Spencer is to succeed him as Chamberlain to the Queen. Colonel Fitzroy, the Duke of Grafton's brother, is made her Vice-Chamberlain;—a clear proof of the favour of the Duke.

* George William Hervey, second Earl of Bristol of that family.

† Charles Pratt, Lord Camden.

The Parliament is to meet on Tuesday next; and a busy session it must be. The turbulent temper of Boston, of which you will see the full accounts in all the papers, is a disagreeable prospect. *Corsica* will not fail to be talked of, and the heat of the late elections must rekindle as the petitions come to be heard. How happy do I feel to be quite out of the whirlwind! How I should feel the remains of my gout if I knew that I was to be hurried down to the House of Commons! The town will not want even private amusement, which must pass too through the parliamentary channel. I mean the Duke of Grafton's divorce; an event I am very sorry for, as I wish well to both parties.

Are the Black Prince and Princess not arrived yet? I am impatient to hear of their landing, and to learn the present state of their charms. I am glad they are not parrots, and will not be able to jabber what they hear on shipboard, to the great scandal of an Austrian Court. Adieu!

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## LETTER CXXX.

Arlington Street, Nov. 18, 1768.

As there has been no event since the Parliament met, I did not write to you any account of it. Being happily quit of it, I do not burthen my memory with inquiring into details. If any genius should arise, or promise to arise, one is sure enough of hearing it

without curiosity. By the modesty of the Opposition, and by their little impatience for a division, it is plain they were conscious of the weakness of their numbers. From their conduct yesterday, it is certain that they have more weaknesses than one. They moved for all papers, with *all* powers, in which any mention has been made of Corsica. When the strength of a new Parliament is not known, methinks it were wise, by a plausible question to draw in as many of the lookers out, at least of the rational and the well meaning, as possible. In lieu of that, they frame a question that required a very opponent stomach to digest. Accordingly, the motion was rejected by 230 to 84 — and thus a fluctuating majority becomes a stable one—for every interested man will now be in a hurry to be the two hundred and thirty first. It was a great day for the Administration, a better for the Duke of Choiseul, a bad one for this country; for whatever the Ministry may incline or wish to do, France will look on this vote as a decision not to quarrel for Corsica. She may determine to pursue a scheme she was ready to abandon; and we may be at last drawn in to save Corsica, when it might have been saved without our interfering.

The Duke of Newcastle* is dead, of a stroke of a palsy. He had given up politics ever since—his illness a few months ago! It does not make the least alteration of any kind.

So the Turks have opened their temple of Janus!

* Thomas Holles Pelham, Duke of Newcastle.

To how many more temples it will communicate, who can tell? As France persuaded them to unlock it, no doubt she has false keys to other gates. The Duke of Choiseul totters; but sometimes our Administration props him, and sometimes our Opposition.

Lord Chatham has got a regular fit of the gout after so long an intermission. Many think this indicates his re-appearance. If anything can re-produce him on the stage, the gout and the smell of war can. He might not like to make it while minister. There is nothing to check him, when out of place.

Adieu! for I have other letters to write, and am in haste to go out. I have seen with satisfaction your glories in the Gazette.

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## LETTER CXXXI.

Arlington Street, Nov. 25, 1768.

THE young gentleman who will deliver this to you, is the son of Lord Kaimes,* a very learned and ingenious gentleman in Scotland, well known by his works. I have been desired to add my recommendation to these titles, though they want none; and though you want no incitement to be obliging and kind to your countrymen. It is indeed defrauding you of that merit, if I occasion the least part of it to be imputed

* Henry Home, the eminent Scottish Judge, well known for his writings on various subjects. Becoming a Judge of Session, he assumed, according to custom in Scotland, the title of Lord Kames. His writings were not confined to his own profession. Among other works, he published "Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion;" "An Introduction to the Art of Thinking," and "Sketches of the History of Man."—ED.

to my solicitation. However, I know it is a pleasure to you to oblige me, and therefore I beg you will indulge your propensity; and you are sure I shall acknowledge your friendship, while you are pleasing yourself by exerting your good breeding and good offices in favour of this gentleman.

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## LETTER CXXXII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 2, 1768.

THE Middlesex election is to be on Thursday, and every management and every mismanagement has been used to make it produce more tumults. The House of Commons forgetting the day, ordered Wilkes to appear at their bar to-day; and when they had granted that, he demanded to call Lord Temple, Lord Sandwich, and Lord March,* to be examined by him. As the demand was artfully made for the first singly, nobody cared, and the House allowed it. Then he asked for the two others. When the first had been granted, there could be no pretence for refusing the others. The two have been in a horrid anxiety, concluding Lord Temple would desire to go; but yesterday, when the Commons sent to the Lords to ask leave for the appearance of all three, Lord Temple was not in the house, and, I hear, disclaims having had any connection with Wilkes for some time. The Lords replied, they

* William Douglas Earl of March and Ruglen, afterwards Duke of Queensberry. He had encouraged Kidgell to inform against Wilkes's Essay on Woman.

would return an answer by their own messengers; and have postponed the consideration to Monday. In the mean time they are beginning to exert themselves to prevent riots, and yesterday committed a solicitor to Newgate for prevarication, when he was examined for having prosecuted a justice of peace, who took up a rioter last spring by the orders of their House. The other House have also put off the appearance of Wilkes before them till after the Middlesex election. These steps do not look favourably for him.

In the mean time, new game is started. Lord Chatham is reconciled to Lord Temple and Mr. Grenville. Impatience longs to know whether the first will reappear again. His friends say that he has a most favourable fit of the gout, and will certainly come forth after Christmas. Others, that this reconciliation was patched up by Lady Chatham, from a sense of his imbecility, and desire of putting her children under the protection of her brothers. I do not know what to think. His resignation, followed directly by a fit of the gout, looks suspicious. And yet, has he been acting madness for two years together? Will his appearance have any effect, if he does produce himself? and how are he and Mr. Grenville to marry their incompatible politics together. Oh! say the last dozen years, what trouble is there in reconciling inconsistencies! or, suppose he is mad,—is he a worse politician for that? *Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixturâ dementiæ.* A mad minister and a mad people must conquer the world.

Your neighbour Paoli, I see, goes on grinding the

French to powder. The Duc de Choiseul has a still worse enemy at home. There is a Mademoiselle L'Ange, now Countess de Barré, who has mounted from the dregs of her profession to the zenith of it, and gained an ascendant that all the duchesses and beauties of Versailles could not attain. Her husband has long been the pimp of Marshal Richelieu, and married this nymph in order to pave her way to favour. She gets ground every day, and probably will save Paoli before my Lord Chatham steps in to his assistance.

We have a new Russian Ambassador, who is to be magnificence itself. He is wondrously civil, and copious of words. He treated me the other night with a pompous relation of his sovereign lady's heroism. I never doubted her courage. She sent for Dr. Dimsdale; would have no trial made on any person of her own age and corpulence: went into the country with her usual company, swore Dimsdale to secrecy, and you may swear that he kept his oath to such a lioness. She was inoculated, dined, supped, and walked out in public, and never disappeared but one day. She has now inoculated her son. I wonder she did not, out of magnanimity, try the experiment on him first.

Your brother has had a terrible fit of the gout in his head and all over him. I had a note from him to-day, and he is better. I am recovered so entirely as to be stronger on my feet than before: but I have more resolution, and never touch tea or wine. I preach in vain—the Jesuits are fallen, but the time is not come

for rooting out our physicians. These rogues persuade people that the bootikins are fatal. They now assert that my friend Lady Hervey, who died of a diarrhœa, was killed by the bootikins which she wore for the gout. All they can do is to keep up perspiration, which everybody knows is the only thing that can be done for the gout. Mr. Chute wears them every night, and walks better than he did seven years ago—but there is a charm in nonsense that nothing can resist! It is the only talent that preaches and prescribes with success! A fool, educated in the school of a knave, makes a renowned general, archbishop, chancellor, or physician. What repeal of laws and burning of books there would be, if the world for one age had nothing in it but men of sense!—for they would be forced to be honest if there were no fools. Adieu! my last paragraphs would be treason and heresy in every country upon earth.

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## LETTER CXXXIII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 20, 1768.

We are as much occupied as we were four years ago, with Wilkes. His spirit, which the Scotch call impudence, and the gods confidence, rises every day. He was very near embroiling the two Houses on his demand of the three lords, which I think I mentioned in my last. Mr. Grenville obtained to have Lord Temple omitted; the Lords would not oblige the two others to appear, but they have offered it;

and if ever his affair comes on, which I doubt, will submit to go to the House of Commons. He has desired twice to be heard himself by the Lords, which they have rejected. Since that, he has behaved with new insolence. A printer being taken up by the House of Lords for printing a letter of Lord Weymouth, written three weeks before the affair in St. George's Fields, in which he offered soldiers to the civil magistrate in case of need, and to which a commentary was prefixed that charged the Administration with a premeditated design of blood; the printer confessed, by the authority of Wilkes himself, that both letter and remarks had been transmitted to the press by Wilkes, who still not content, has by hand-bills assumed to himself the honour of many more such publications. The Lords, though enraged, had the prudence not to care to examine him himself, attended as he might be by a mob, and to recollect that he is yet a member of the other House, to which they sent their complaint; a piece of personal discretion, that was none of the wisest, as it was flinging combustible matter into much the more combustible assembly of the two. It happened accordingly, that more fault was found with the letter than with the comment; and after variety of opinions, it was yesterday resolved to hear Wilkes at their bar on the 27th of January; there still being blindness enough not to perceive that the oftener this incendiary is touched, the more he gains ground.

He has had a new triumph. The day of the election for Middlesex the poll had continued peaceable till two o'clock, when a mob broke in, drove every body out of the town, maimed and wounded several, and really occasioned the death of two persons. At first the slaughter was thought more considerable. This mob seems to have been hired by Sir William Beauchamp Proctor for defence, but, by folly or ill-management, proved the sole aggressors. The just scandal given by that proceeding has lost him the election, and Wilkes's counsel and nominee, Serjeant Glynn, was chosen a week afterwards by a large majority. Thus, after a persecution of four years, Wilkes, in prison, names the representatives for Middlesex!

These things must sound strange in Tuscan ears; but the events in a free state are as unlike those in an absolute government as the kinds of government themselves are unlike. The times wear a very tempestuous aspect, and while there is a singular want both of abilities and prudence, there is no want of mischievous intentions. Luckily, America is quiet; France, poor, foiled, and disgraced. In truth, I do not know whether anything could restore harmony at home so soon as a foreign war, for which we are at least better prepared than she is. A war would quite restore Lord Chatham's faculties, when he could have an opportunity of being mad on a larger scale.

We are in constant expectation of hearing of the Duc de Choiseul's fall. The Comtesse de Barri main-

tains her ground, and they say will be presented to the Mesdames as soon as the Queen's mourning is over. This decency is delightful! While his wife lived, the King kept his mistresses openly; now a new one is not to be declared, while the Court still wears black and white silks for the Queen! The Duc d'Aiguillon is talked of as Choiseul's successor. At fifty-eight or nine, his Majesty picks up a prostitute, and gives her leave to change the Administration. I think he should not be called the *well-beloved*, but the *well-beloving*.

I never saw your new residence, Pisa, but have a notion that it is a charming place; but, how German! to take an aversion to Florence! the loveliest town upon earth! Has your little prince no eyes for pictures, statues, buildings, prospects? Where could one like to reign, if not there? For your sake, I still wish the black dogs may prove handsome, else I should not care if they were turnspits.

Tuesday, 23rd.

They talk of strange proceedings, and that prosecutions for murder are to be commenced against the Duke of Northumberland and Sir William Beauchamp, who are taxed with having hired the mob at Brentford. The Houses are adjourned for three weeks; in which time I doubt the Oppositions will be more awake than the Ministers. I rejoice daily and weekly that I have nothing to do with this scene of combustion. Adieu!

## LETTER CXXXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 14, 1769.

WHISTON, and such prophecy-mongers, were very unlucky to die before the present era. They vented their foolish knowledge and foolish conjectures in foretelling the downfall of the Pope and Turk, when there was not the least ground for such surmises. There is not a verse in the Revelations that would not set up a prophet *now*. Your neighbour, the lady of Babylon, is almost reduced to her own b—— house, and I have as little doubt that the Russians will give a good account of the Grand Signor. Are not you diverted with his proposing to the Catholics of Poland to turn Mahometans? It is plain that he thinks the Protestants are the most errant Christians. What pious defenders of the faith the great Turk and the good Czarina are! Then the liberties of the Gallican Church are upheld by Louis Quinze and the Comtesse du Barri; and the liberties of England by that excellent patriot, Alderman Wilkes! Well! you want to know what is doing in the ward of Farringdon Without.* The Lords are to meet on Monday, when the Alderman's writs of error will be argued before them. I think he will find no favour there. He is not to appear at the bar of the other House till the 27th, where he will probably make a better fight. The people are certainly intoxicated

* Wilkes had just been elected Alderman of that ward.

with him, and, should he be expelled, as he expects, he will undoubtedly be able to name his successor for Middlesex. What idle pains Cato, and such folks, took to be virtuous, when they might have been patriots on so much cheaper terms! Wilkes has got his addresses to his constituents already written and dated from Newgate, whither he expects to be sent; and if he is, he will have ten times a greater levée than my Lord Russell had there. A few days will decide whether my Lord Chatham will appear and claim his old civic crown again; in short, whether Cæsar will join Alderman Catiline, or wait till matters are riper for his descent. For my own part, I do not believe this demi-god will ever revisit the earth, since he has been so shorn of his beams.

All this is amusing; and yet, methinks, I would rather we made a great figure than a comical one. When one has been used to glory under Mr. Pitt, I sigh to think how he and we are fallen! We are afraid to meddle even in little Corsica, though the French have so wofully miscarried there; and we enjoy half the empire of the Mogul only to traffic in India Stock! We are no longer great any way. We have no great men; no great orators, writers, or poets. One would think they had all been killed in the last war. Nay, our very actors are uncommonly bad. I saw a new tragedy the other night, that was worse played, though at Drury-lane, than by any strollers I ever beheld; and yet they are good enough for the new pieces. The best we have

are little comic operas. *Apropos* to operas; your old acquaintance the Duke of Dorset * is dead, after having worn out his constitution, and almost his estate. He has not left a tree standing in the venerable old park at Knowle. However, the family think themselves very happy that he did not marry a girl whom he kept, as he had a mind to do, if the state of his understanding had not empowered his relations to prevent it.

Did you see as he passed to Rome the great lord † that gave birth to all our present disputes? He is said to be much recovered.

I shall return to London the day after to-morrow; and as this cannot set out till Tuesday, probably I shall have something to add. Do you know anything of Lady Orford, and the state of her health? Mr. Hamilton spoke of her to me in the summer as almost expiring with an asthma.

London, Jan. 16th.

Wilkes's writs of error were argued yesterday before the Lords; and the Lord Chief Justice Wilmot, in the name of the other judges, declared in behalf of the verdict already given against him, which was then confirmed, without one lord saying a syllable in his defence. As he has two parts of the legislature thus firm against him, it remains to see whether he and the people can make any impression on the House of Commons. If the world can attend to anything else, this week comes on before the House of Lords that

* Charles Sackville, second Duke of Dorset. † Lord Bute.

most extraordinary cause between the families of Douglas and Hamilton, equal to any of the *Causes Célèbres*. Adieu! I do not hear a word of my Lord Chatham. Madame du Barri, the French meteor, does not seem to be a fixed star.

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## LETTER CXXXV.

Arlington Street, Jan. 31, 1769.

THE affair of Wilkes is rather undecided yet, than in suspense. It has been a fair trial between faction and corruption; of two such common creatures, the richest will carry it.

The Court of Aldermen set aside the election of Wilkes on some informality, but he was immediately rechosen. This happened on Friday last, the very day of his appearance at the House of Commons. He went thither without the least disturbance or mob, having dispersed his orders accordingly, which are obeyed implicitly. He did not, however, appear at the bar till ten at night, the day being wasted in debating whether he should be suffered to enter on his case at large, or be restrained to his two chief complaints. The latter was carried by 270 to 131, a majority that he will not easily reduce. He was then called in, looked ill, but behaved decently, and demanded to take the oaths and his seat. This affair, after a short debate, was refused; and his counsel being told the restrictions imposed, the House ad-

journed at midnight. To-day he goes again to the House, but whatever steps he takes there, or however long debates he may occasion, you may look upon his fate as decided in that place.

We are in hourly expectation of hearing that a nymph, more common still than the two I have mentioned, has occasioned what Wilkes has failed in now, a change in an administration. I mean the Comtesse du Barri. The *grands habits* are made, and nothing wanting for her presentation but—what do you think? some woman of quality to present her. In that servile Court and country, the nobility have had spirit enough to decline paying their court, though the King has stooped *à des bassesses* to obtain it. The Duc de Choiseul will be the victim; and they pretend to say that he has declared he will resign *à l'Anglaise*, rather than be *chassé* by such a creature. His indiscretion is astonishing: he has said at his own table, and she has been told so, "Madame du Barri est très mal informée; on ne parle pas des catins chez moi." Catin diverts herself and King Solomon the wise with tossing oranges into the air after supper, and crying, "*Saute, Choiseul! saute, Praslin!*" and then Solomon laughs heartily. Sometimes she flings powder in his sage face, and calls him *Jean Farine!* Well! we are not the foolishest nation in Europe yet! It is supposed that the Duc d'Aiguillon will be the successor.

I am going to send away this letter, because you will be impatient, and the House will not rise probably till long after the post is gone out. I did not

think last May that you would hear this February that there was an end of mobs, that Wilkes was expelled, and the colonies quieted. However, pray take notice that I do not stir a foot out of the province of gazetteer into that of prophet. I protest, I know no more than a prophet what is to come. Adieu!

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LETTER CXXXVI.

Arlington Street, Feb. 6, 1769.

I WAS not mistaken in announcing to you the approaching expulsion of Wilkes. It passed on Friday night, or rather at three on Saturday morning, by a majority of 219 against 137, after four days of such fatigue and long sittings as never were known together. His behaviour, in every respect but confidence, was so poor, that it confirmed what I have long thought, that he would lose himself sooner in the House of Commons than he can be crushed anywhere else. He has so little quickness or talent for public speaking, that he would not be heard with patience. Now he has all the *éclat* that sufferings, boldness, or his writings can give him—not that I think the latter have other merit than being calculated for the mob and the moment. He stands again for Middlesex, to be again expelled; yet nobody dares oppose him; and he is as sure of recommending his successor. Still there are people so wild and blind, as not to see that every triumph against him is followed by mortification and disgrace.

In this country every violence turns back upon its authors. My father, who governed for the longest time, and Mr. Pelham, who enjoyed the quietest administration, always leaned to lenient measures. They who think themselves wiser, have not met with equal success. As worthless a fellow as Wilkes is, the rigours exercised towards him have raised a spirit that will require still wiser heads to allay. Men have again turned seriously to the study of those controversies that agitated this country an hundred years ago; and instead of dipping in Roman and Greek histories for flowers to decorate the speeches of false patriotism, principles are revived that have taken deeper root; and I hope we may not see quarrels of a graver complexion than the dirty squabbles for places and profit. Persecution for politics has just the same issue as for religion; it spreads the oppressed doctrine; and though I think Wilkes as bad a man as if he were a *saint*, he will every day get disciples who will profit of his martyrdom. Thank God, that he has not turned methodist!

Apropos to *saints*. Do you know that one of the chief supports of Madame du Barri is that old hypocrite the Duc de la Vauguion, the dauphin's governor, and patron of the Jesuits. I remember, when I was in France, it was a common saying, "que Monsieur de Choiseul n'avoit rien fait en chassant les Jesuits, s'il ne chassoit aussi M. de la Vauguion." This Ignatian preceptor went the other day to *Madame*, the King's eldest and favourite daughter, and told her that Ma-

dame du Barri would certainly be presented, and that her Royal Highness would do well to receive her kindly. The Princess asked if he came by the King's order? He said, no; but that the Duc de Richelieu, and other of her Royal Highness' friends, advised her to that conduct. She said, with spirit and dignity, "Monsieur, sortez de ma chambre." We believe the presentation was made last Sunday, though the account is not yet come; and I think there is as little doubt of Choiseul's fall. I agree with you in praying that it may save Paoli. What an excellent contrast in the beginning and end of the King's life!

Do you know, I expect that the vast northern war will teach the Turks to read Grotius and Puffendorff. Adieu!

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## LETTER CXXXVII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 28, 1769.

So you and the Jesuits have lost the Pope! I don't believe they will comfort themselves so easily as you will. You are too discreet to betray the secrets of your province, therefore I will not ask if you have received any instructions to promote the interest of my Lord Bute to succeed him; yet, without your authority, I could easily make Mr. Wilkes believe so—or at least say so. I know where it would pass for as much gospel as any she is inclined to receive. I am to dine to-morrow with the famous Mrs. Macaulay,* along with

* During the heighth of his popularity, Dr. Wilson, Rector of St. Ste-

the Duc de la Rochefoucault. She is one of the sights that all foreigners are carried to see. Did you know this young duke? He is very amiable and worthy—much more worthy than his ancestor; not quite so agreeable. Our ladies run the men hard: we have actually two or three *upon the carpet* that for these last ten days have deadened the lustre of Wilkes himself, though his cause is far from being drawn to the dregs. A huge subscription has been made for him; but, with all the idolatry of his party, they will not trust his divinity with his own offerings, but are paying his debts and thefts. Is not there a sobriety in our madness that stamps it for our own?

Well, but to come to goddesses: after a marriage of twenty years, Augustus Hervey,* having fallen in love with a physician's daughter at Bath, has attacked his spouse, the Maid of Honour, the fair Chudleigh, and sought a divorce for adultery. Unfortunately, he had waited till all the witnesses of their marriage, and of her two deliveries, are dead, as well as the two children. The provident virgin had not been so negligent. Last year she forced herself into the house of the parson who had married them, and who was at the point of death. By bullying, and to get rid of her, she forced the poor man to give up the certificate. Since that she has appeared in Doctors' Commons, and sworn by the Virgins Mary and Diana, that she never was mar-

phen's, Walbrook, conferred upon her the unprecedented honour of erecting a statue to her while living, in the chancel of his church, which was removed by his successsor.—Ed.

* Second son of John Lord Hervey, afterwards Earl of Bristol.

ried to Mr. Hervey. The Ecclesiastical Court has admitted her corporal oath, and enjoined silence to Mr. Hervey. Next week this fair injured innocence, who is but fifty, is to be married to the Duke of Kingston, who has kept her openly for almost half that time, and who by this means will recover half his fortune which he had lavished on her. As a proof of her purity and poverty, her wedding-gown is white satin, trimmed with Brussels lace and pearls. Every word of this history is exactly true. The physician, who is a little more in his senses than the other actors, and a little honester, will not give his daughter; nay, has offered her five thousand pounds not to marry Mr. Hervey, but Miss Rhubarb is as much above worldly decorum as the rest, and persists, though there is no more doubt of the marriage of Mr. Hervey and Miss Chudleigh than that of your father and mother. It is a cruel case upon his family, who can never acquiesce in the legitimacy of his children, if any come from this bigamy.*

The French cannot keep pace with us. Madame du Barri's presentation is still at a stand; but the Jesuits still trust in her and the Duc de la Vauguion, and flatter themselves that this new idolatry will bring back King Solomon to his old gods. I was talking of this adventure the other day to old Mrs. Selwyn :† she said, with all the wit of her son George, "The French have often outwitted us; I hope now they will outfool us." You

* This marriage did not take place.

† Mary Farringdon, widow of John Selwyn, Esq., (Treasurer to Caroline, Queen of George II.) and Woman of the Bedchamber to that Queen.

see that will not be an easy matter. My dear sir, you ought to be recalled; indeed you are too much in your senses to represent us. Two nights ago, I was looking over some part of our correspondence, and I find that for seven-and-twenty years I have been sending you the annals of Bedlam. Adieu!

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## LETTER CXXXVIII.

Arlington Street, March 23, 1769.

More tempests! Pray, Mr. Minister, keep up your dignity as well as you can; for I doubt that you will be a little laughed at. You are not now representing the conquerors of East and West. Your crest is fallen! Our campaigns do not extend beyond the confines of Middlesex. We will begin with the *third* election at Brentford. One Dingley was sent to oppose Wilkes, but took panic and ran away, and nobody would propose him. The next day he advertised that he had gone thither with all the resolution in the world, provided there had been no danger, and so Wilkes was chosen once more. The House again rejected him; but, lest the country should complain of not being represented, another writ is issued; the Court is to set up somebody, and a new egg is laid for riots and clamours.

Oh! but this is not all. As one or two towns had sent instructions to their members, it was thought wise to procure loyal addresses, and one was obtained from Essex, which, being the great county for calves, pro-

duced nothing but ridicule. I foresaw, and said from the first moment, that there could not be a sillier step taken, as it would sow division in every county and great town in England, by splitting the inhabitants into instructors and addressors. Well! the aforesaid Mr. Dingley got an assembly of merchants, and carried an address ready drawn. It produced opposition and hubbub, and Mr. Dingley struck a lawyer in the face and beat out one of his teeth. The man knocked him down, drubbed him, and put him in the Crown Office.

This scheme defeated, an address was left at a public office to be signed by all who pleased, and yesterday was fixed for it to be presented at St. James's by six hundred merchants and others. This imposing cavalcade no sooner set forth than they were hissed and pelted; and when they came to Temple-bar they found an immense mob, who had shut the gates against them, and they were forced to make their escape by any streets and by-lanes that were not occupied. Not a third part reached St. James's, and they were overtaken by a prodigious concourse, attending a hearse drawn by four horses. On one side of the hearse hung a large escutcheon, representing the chairman at Brentford killing Clarke; on the other, the guards firing on the mob in St. George's Fields and shooting Allen, with streams of blood running down. This procession drove to St. James's Gate, where grenadiers were fixed to prevent their entrance, and the gates towards the park shut. Here the King, Ministers, and Foreign Ministers were besieged till past

four, though the Riot-Act was read, and Lord Talbot* came down, and seized one man, while the mob broke the steward's wand in his hand. It was near five before they could recover and present the address, which the mob had tried to seize; they had so pelted the chairman of the committee of merchants, that he was not fit to appear. The Dukes of Northumberland and Kingston were as ill treated. The latter, coming from Bedford House, had been taken for the Duke of Bedford, and had his new wedding-coach, favours, and liveries covered with mud. Fifteen men are taken up, but I don't find that anything can be proved against them. In short, never was a more disgraceful scene! Don't wonder if *I* smile, who have seen more formidable mobs, and something of a better head opposed to them. Many cry out "Shame!"—but half, that cry out, I remember encouraging mobs, and for much worse ends than these poor infatuated people have in view. The Minister† of those days would not have seen such a procession arrive in St. James's without having had intelligence of it, nor without being prepared for it. Those great and able persons, the Bedford faction, have conjured up this storm, and now are frightened out of their wits at it. All is perfectly quiet to-day, and the King has been at the House to pass the Bill for the Duke of Grafton's divorce. Luckily, Newmarket begins on Monday, during which holy season there is always a suspension of arms.

* William first Earl of Talbot, Lord Steward. † Sir Robert Walpole.

Good Friday, 24th.

Peace and cross-buns reign to-day. If no new ingenuity is stirred, the people, I don't doubt, will give no more disturbance. But if the Scotch, who cannot rest in patience without persecuting Wilkes, and who have neither known how to quiet or to quell him, prompt new violence, the nation will call out for Lord Chatham and Lord Temple, and the Ministers will have leisure to repent the succession of blunders that they have committed. It is strange that men will not learn in every country that defensive measures are the only wise measures for an Administration! For a little more power they risk what they possess, and never discover that the most absolute are those which reign in the hearts of the people. Were Cardinal Richelieu, Cromwell, or Louis XI. more despotic than Mr. Pitt at the end of the last reign? And then he had the comfort of going to bed every night without the fear of being assassinated. What a blessed life does Count d'Œyras* pass, who is forced to lock up himself and all his power at the end of his palace, with guards in every room, and with every door barred and bolted! As superior power cannot bestow superior wisdom or strength, nor destroy the real equality between man and man, is it not wonderful that any man should stake character, life, and peace of mind, against the odious prerogative of being feared? Hated alive, and reviled dead, they risk everything for the silly satis-

* Prime Minister of Portugal.

faction of turning voluntary into trembling sycophants. Every minister is sure of flatterers enough: no, those flatterers must be slaves. Charles I. was not satisfied with the servile adulation of his bishops; the Presbyterian ministers must burn incense too. Oh! that men should still imagine that to be hated is the way to happiness!

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## LETTER CXXXIX.

Arlington Street, April 14, 1769.

YESTERDAY, the day of expectation, is over: I mean the election at Brentford, for I must recollect that you have not been thinking of nothing else for a fortnight, as we have. It ended bloodless, both sides having agreed to keep the peace; chance ratified that compromise. Take notice, I engage no farther than for what is past. Wilkes triumphed, as usual, having a majority of between eight and nine hundred. The court-candidate,* who had offered himself for the service, and who was as imprudently accepted, gave no proofs of the determined valour that he had promised. His friends exerted themselves as little; and though he was to have been conveyed by a squadron of many gentlemen, his troop did not muster above twenty, assembled in his father's garden, broke down the wall that they might steal a march, and yet were repulsed at Hyde Park Corner, where the Commander lost his

* Colonel Luttrel, eldest son of Lord Irnham.

hat, and in self-defence rode over a foot-passenger. He polled under three hundred, and owed his safety to Wilkes's friends. This defeat the House of Commons are at this moment repairing—I believe I may add, by widening the breach; for, as they intend to reject Wilkes and accept Lutterel, they will probably make the county quite mad. In short, they have done nothing but flounder from one blunder into another, and, by an impartial mixture of rashness and timidity, have brought matters to a pass, which I fear will require at last very sharp methods to decide one way or other. We have no heads but wrong ones; and wrong heads on both sides have not the happy attribute of two negatives in making an affirmative. Instead of annihilating Wilkes by buying or neglecting him, his enemies have pushed the Court on a series of measures which have made him excessively important; and now every step they take must serve to increase his faction, and make themselves more unpopular. The clouds all around them are many and big, and will burst as fast as they try violent methods. I tremble at the prospect, and suffer to see the abyss into which we are falling, and the height from whence we have fallen! We were tired of being in a situation to give the law to Europe, and now cannot give it with safety to the mob—for giving it, when they are not disposed to receive it, is of all experiments the most dangerous; and whatever may be the consequence in the end, seldom fails to fall on the heads of those who undertake it. I have said it to

you more than once; it is amazing to me that men do not prefer the safe, amiable and honourable method of governing the people as they like to be governed, to the invidious and restless task of governing them contrary to their inclinations. If princes or ministers considered, that despair makes men fearless, instead of making them cowards, surely they would abandon such fruitless policy. It requires ages of oppression, barbarism and ignorance, to sink mankind into pusillanimous submission; and it requires a climate too that softens and enervates. I do not think we are going to try the experiment; but as I am sorry the people give provocation, so I am grieved to see that provocation too warmly resented, because men forget from whence they set out, and mutual injuries beget new principles, and open to wider views than either party had at first any notion of. Charles the First would have been more despotic, if he had defeated the republicans, than he would have dreamed of being before the civil war; and Colonel Cromwell certainly never thought of becoming Protector, when he raised his regiment. The King lost his head, and the Colonel his rest; and we were so fortunate, after a deluge of blood, as to relapse into a little better condition than we had been before the contest; but if the son of either had been an active rogue, we might have lost our liberties for some time, and not recovered them without a much longer struggle.

I must now desire a favour of you. The Contessa

Rena* is returned to Florence, and we hear has even been received at Court, yet she is not satisfied without the *countenance del Signor Ministro d'Inghilterra.* As an Austrian Court has not been squeamish, I think you need not be so: nay, I don't suspect you. Besides, as our representative, you may plead the precedent of her Grace of Kingston. But, without a joke, it will oblige me and two of my friends, if you will take notice of her and shew her civilities. She is a good-humoured inoffensive creature; I knew her myself; she has been at Strawberry, and lain there; *en tout bien, et honneur, s'entend;* and it will oblige the above persons extremely, if she writes word, that *Monsù Menn* has distinguished her at my request. I would not ask this, if I thought it would put you under any difficulties: nor do I mean that you should neglect the emperor for her. Methinks, without stirring out of the street *de' Santi Apostoli,*† you have got acquainted with as many sovereigns as old Peterborough,‡ that bragged of having seen more Kings and postilions than any man in Europe. I delight in the mock election of a Pope made to amuse Cæsar. How the Capitol must blush at such a Cæsar, and such an entertainment!

Luckly, I think the Capitol will see little more than mock elections.

* A Florentine, who had been long in England; had originally been mistress (at Florence, where she was wife of a wine-merchant) of Lord Pembroke, and afterwards here, of the Earl of March, and occasionally of others. See Correspondence of George Selwyn, vol. i. *passim.*

† In which Sir Horace Mann lived at Florence.

‡ Charles Mordaunt, the famous earl.

Otranto,* I must tell you, is in the kingdom of Naples, not in Sicily. You will see by this paragraph that I have received a certain letter† from you, to which I do not care to say more by the post. Wherever Otranto is, I am glad I had no letter from thence.

Madame du Barri will certainly be presented yet. Whether she will be able to save Corsica, I don't know. Such nymphs are seldom born for the good of any country. My dear sir, it would be worthy of you to shuffle your two or three great and little princes together, and form a league that for once might have the good of mankind for its object. Adieu!

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## LETTER CXL.

Arlington Street, May 11, 1769.

You know my exactitude, and therefore will have justly concluded from my silence, that nothing material has happened since I wrote last.

The election of Colonel Lutterel, though it has given much offence, produced none of the disturbances that were expected. The supporters of the Bill of Rights have, on the contrary, adopted a much more decent system; not with the approbation of Wilkes, whose existence depending on heats and riots, has made him afraid of being dropped, and of seeing

* Mr. Walpole had written the gothic story called "The Castle of Otranto."

† Lord Bute, when at Florence, had talked to Sir Horace Mann (probably to please him) of writing to Mr. Walpole from Otranto.

any grievances in question, except his own. The supporters, or London Tavern, as they are called from the place of their meeting, determined on a petition to the King, in which they have enumerated all the matters of complaint from the beginning of this reign. This has lain to be signed, and has been prodigiously signed by the freeholders of Middlesex for these three weeks; and it was expected would be presented a week ago. What has prevented it, I don't know; probably the sitting of the Parliament, which was to have risen last Tuesday was se'nnight; but on the preceding Saturday fifteen of Wilkes's friends petitioned against Lutterel. The House could not refuse to hear them; last Monday was appointed, when, after a debate that lasted till near three in the morning, Lutterel was confirmed by two hundred and twenty-one to one hundred and fifty-two. Sixty-nine was no shining majority. The next day George Grenville dined at a tavern with Lord Rockingham's friends, and this union will no doubt last—till next session. On Tuesday the Houses were prorogued; but as the King went to put an end to the session, the behaviour of the people was as offensive as it could be, without an actual tumult.

Lord Chatham, as I foretold, has, you find, not appeared. His friends still talk of his coming to town; I see not to what end now.

Well! Madame du Barri has been suddenly presented, when nobody thought of it. The King returning from Choisi, found the Duc de Richelieu read-

ing a letter, who said, "Sire, the Comtesse du Barri desires to have the honour of being presented to your Majesty."—"With all my heart," replied Solomon; "when she will; to-morrow, if she likes it." Presented she was accordingly, and at night gave a great supper; to which were invited Richelieu and all the Duc de Choiseul's enemies. Richelieu, engaged in this plot with the King, looks very unfavourable for the Minister. Everybody is now presented to her, and she has been publicly at Marly. The mesdames scratched M. de Beauvilliers out of the list for that party on *his* being presented. But I should think such affronts would only render the mistress more eager to establish herself. I grieve that if the change should arrive, it will not be in time to save Paoli.

The Russians have begun with vivacity and seized Asoph; still the Empress makes me a Turk in my heart. Don't you love the Chinese? Czernichew, her sumptuous Minister here, was named for the embassy to China, but the Emperor said he would not receive an ambassador from a murderess. How often what we call barbarians make Europe blush!

Oh! I forgot to tell you that the Comte du Barri, who has been acknowledged by Lord Barrymore,* insists on calling himself by that title. He was reported to be dead. The Duc de Chartres said, "C'est pour nous prouver qu'il est véritablement Comte du *Barry-mort*." I think the summer will be tolerably

* As a relation.

quiet here. Everybody is going to make hay and keep sheep, except the light troops that will skirmish in the newspapers. You, I hope, have got rid of your Emperors, and will have a little quiet too. When do your old folks at Rome intend to choose the last Pope? Does the Emperor design to dethrone St. Peter and restore Julius Cæsar?

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## LETTER CXLI.

Strawberry Hill, May 25, 1769.

EVERYTHING here is perfectly calm; Wilkes so much forgotten, that he seems to have forgot himself. The Middlesex petition was at last presented yesterday, but as decently and respectfully as if it had come from Scotland. Opposition, I think, must set out upon some new fund, for even they themselves seem tired of the old.

The Duke of Grafton has already chosen a new wife, and is going to marry Miss Wrottesley, a niece of the Duchess of Bedford. She is not handsome, but is quiet and reasonable, and has a very amiable character.

As I told you in my last, we shall be happy enough to be able to divert ourselves with foreign news, Turks, Pope, or Paoli. It is generally thought here that the last will be able to hold out, from the inaccessible fastnesses of his island, and from the almost

impossibility that the French will have of supplying themselves with provisions; and that even if they should succeed, the expense will pass all bounds. I think the Duc de Choiseul not at all likely to live long enough in his ministerial capacity to see that conquest achieved. His successor, whoever it shall be, will scarce compliment him by finishing his work at so dear and burdensome a rate.

So the Countess* is coming over, and the Countess is going back again! Why, that is all that one has to say on her coming and going. I do not know whether she and her son will meet, but neither can meet with any body less worth meeting.

Everybody is going into the country to recruit themselves with health or money, or wit, or faction. This has been an expensive winter in all those articles. London is such a drain, that we seem annihilated in summer: at least the activity and events from the beginning of November to the beginning of June are so out of proportion to the other five months, that we are not the same nation in the one half year and the other. Paris itself, compared to London, appeared to me a mere country town, where they live upon one piece of news for a month. When I lived in the country (which was but the three last summers of my father's life, for I don't call this place so), I used to be tired to death of the conversation on the price of oats and barley,

* Lady Orford.

and those topics that people talk about and about by their almanack, and which never do, and which never have occasion to come to a conclusion. I have been so used to think to a point, that the common conversation of the world about common things is insupportable to me; and to say the truth, I know less of the common affairs of the world than if I had lived all my days in a college. Elections, justice business, prices of commodities, and all matters of detail are Hebrew to me. Men that know every circumstance, and women that never know any, are equally good company to me. I had as willingly hear a story where everything is confounded, as where everything is detailed; the event of everything seeming to me all that is worth knowing; and then I want something new. As I have nothing new, I may as well finish my letter. Adieu!

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## LETTER CXLII.

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1769.

I THANK you for the history of the Pope and his genealogy, or, rather, for what is to be his genealogy; for I suppose all those tailors and coachmen his relations will now found noble families. They may enrich their blood with the remaining spoils of the Jesuits, unless, which would not surprise me, his new Holiness should now veer about, and endeavour to save the order; for I think the Church full as likely to fall by sacrificing

its janissaries, as by any attacks that can be made upon it. *Deme unum, deme etiam unum.*

If I care little about your Roman politics, I am not so indifferent about your Corsican. Poor brave Paoli! —but he is not disgraced! We, that have sat still and seen him overwhelmed, must answer it to history. Nay, the Mediterranean will taunt us in the very next war. Choiseul triumphs over us and Madame du Barri: her star seems to have lost its influence. I do not know what another lady* will say to Choiseul on the late behaviour of his friend, the Ambassador, here. As the adventure will make a chapter in the new edition of Wiquefort, and, consequently, will strike *you*, I will give you the detail. At the ball on the King's birthday, Count Czernichew was sitting in the box of the Foreign Ministers next to Count Seilern, the Imperial Ambassador. The latter, who is as fierce as the Spread Eagle itself, and as stiff as the chin of all the Ferdinands, was, according to his custom, as near to Jupiter as was possible. Monsieur du Chatelet and the Prince de Masserano came in. Chatelet sidled up to the two former, spoke to them and passed behind them, but on a sudden lifted up his leg and thrust himself in between the two Imperials. The Russian, astonished and provoked, endeavoured to push him away, and a jostle began that discomposed the faces and curls of both; and the Russian even dropped the word *impertinent*. Czernichew, however, quitted the spot of battle, and the Prince de Masse-

* The Czarina.

rano, in support of the family-compact, hobbled into the place below Chatelet. As the two champions retired, more words at the door. However, the Russian's coach being first, he astonished everybody by proposing to set Monsieur du Chatelet down at his own house. In the coach, *it is said*, the Frenchman protested he had meant nothing personal either to Count Czernichew, or to the Russian Minister, but having received orders from his Court to take place on all occasion *next* to the Imperial Ambassador, he had but done his duty. Next morning he visited Czernichew, and they are *personally* reconciled. It was, however, feared that the dispute would be renewed, for, at the King's next levée, both were at the door, ready to push in when it should be opened; but the Russian kept behind, and at the bottom of the room without mixing with the rest of the Foreign Ministers. The King, who was much offended at what had passed, called Count Czernichew into the middle of the room, and talked to him for a very considerable time. Since then, the Lord Chamberlain has been ordered to notify to all the Foreign Ministers that the King looks on the ball at Court as a private ball, and declares, *to prevent such disagreeable altercations for the future*, that there is no precedence there. This declaration is ridiculed, because the ball at Court is almost the only ceremony observed there, and certainly the most formal, the princes of the blood dancing first, and everybody else being taken out according to their rank. Yet

the King, being the fountain of all rank, may certainly declare what he pleases, especially in his own palace. The public papers, which seldom spare the French, are warm for the Russian. Chatelet, too, is not popular, nor well at Court. He is wrong-headed, and at Vienna was very near drawing his Court into a scrape by his haughtiness. His own friends even doubt whether this last exploit will not offend at Versailles, as the Duc de Choiseul has lately been endeavouring to soften the Czarina, wishes to send a minister thither, and has actually sent an agent. Chatelet was to have gone this week, but I believe waits to hear how his behaviour is taken. Personally, I am quite on his side, though I think him in the wrong; but he is extremely civil to me; I live much at his house, admire his wife exceedingly, and, besides, you know, have declared war with the Czarina; so what I say is quite in confidence to you, and for your information. As an Englishman, I am whatever Madam Great Britain can expect of me. As intimate with the Chatelets, and extremely attached to the Duchess of Choiseul, I detest Madame du Barri and her faction. You, who are a Foreign Minister, and can distinguish like a theologian between the *two natures*, perfectly comprehend all this; and, therefore, to the charity of your casuistry I recommend myself in this jumble of contradictions, which you may be sure do not give me any sort of trouble either way. At least I have not *three* distinctions, like Chatelet when he affronted

Czernichew, but neither in his private nor public capacity.

This fracas happens very luckily, as we had nothing left to talk of; for of the Pope we think no more, according to the old saying, than of the Pope of Rome. Of Wilkes there is no longer any question, and of the war under the Pole we hear nothing. Corsica, probably, will occasion murmurs, but they will be preserved in pickle till next winter. I am come hither for two months, very busy with finishing my round tower, which has stood still these five years, and with an enchanting new cottage that I have built, and other little works. In August I shall go to Paris for six weeks. In short, I am delighted with having bid adieu to Parliament and politics, and with doing nothing but what I like all the year round. Adieu!

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## LETTER CXLIII.

Arlington, Street, July 19, 1769.

You will possibly wonder that you have not heard from me, when the public papers must have raised your curiosity and impatience. The appearance of Lord Chatham, after so long an exclusion of himself, is no indifferent event. It has opened all eyes and mouths from hence to Madrid. I am not apt to neglect such æras. In truth, I wished to be able to tell you more than mere conjectures. *Venit, vidit,*— the *vicit* is to come. He was twenty minutes alone

with the King; but what passed, neither of their Majesties has been pleased to tell. *General conversation only,* is the word given out. That the Earl is perfectly well, that is, *compos mentis,* and grown fat, is certain. That the moment of his appearance, *i. e.* so immediately after the petition of the Livery of London, set on foot and presented by his friend Alderman Beckford, has a hostile look, cannot be doubted. That he was *not* sent for—is, I believe, still more true. Farther this deponent saith not. If petitioning had caught and run briskly, to be sure it might have been necessary to call in so great a fireman to stop the flame, as apothecaries give rhubarb to check a looseness. But London, for the first time in its life, has not dictated to England. Essex and Hertfordshire have refused to petition; Wiltshire and Worcester say they will petition, and Yorkshire probably will. But London has so *outdone its usual outdoings,** that the example is not tempting, especially as they did not venture to sign their own petition. They have attacked ministers, judges, and parliament itself. The latter, in all likelihood, will ask them some questions next winter. Lord Holland has already asked one of the Lord Mayor; who chose to shift the blame from himself. It has stirred up a controversy which is not likely to end so. The world is persuaded that there are two factions in the Ministry,—if there were not, it would be the only place void of them. The

* An expression of Cibber on Mrs. Oldfield in his preface to the "Provoked Husband," that was much ridiculed at the time.

East-India Company is all faction and gaming. Such fortunes are made and lost every day as are past belief. Our history will appear a gigantic lie hereafter, when we are shrunk again to our own little island. People trudge to the other end of the town to vote who shall govern empires at the other end of the world. Panchaud, a banker from Paris, broke yesterday for seventy thousand pounds, by buying and selling stock; and Sir Laurence Dundas *paid in* an hundred and forty thousand pounds for what he had bought. The Company have more and greater places to give away than the First Lord of the Treasury. Riches, abuse, cabals, are so enormously overgrown, that one wants conception and words to comprehend or describe them. Even Jewish prophets would have found Eastern hyperboles deficient, if Nineveh had been half so extravagant, luxurious, and rapacious as this wicked good town of London. I expect it will set itself on fire at last, and light the match with India bonds and bank-bills. As I pass by it and look at it, I cannot help talking to it, as Ezekiel would do, and saying "with all those combustibles in thy bowels, with neither government, police, or prudence, how is it that thou still existeth?" Well! I am going to a little quiet town, where they have had nothing but one woman to talk of for this twelvemonth,—I mean Paris. Madame du Barri gains ground, and yet Monsieur de Choiseul carries all his points. He has taken Corsica, bought Sweden, made a Pope, got the Czarina drubbed by the Turks, and has restored the Parlia-

ment of Bretagne, in spite of the Duc d'Aiguillon,—for revenge can make so despotic and ambitious a man as Choiseul even turn patriot,—and yet at this moment I believe he dreads my Lord Chatham more than Madame du Barri.

I shall set out on the fifteenth of next month, and return the first week in October. During that interval I think you had better not write to me, as you know with what difficulty I got your letters there.

I am much concerned that the journeyings and sojournings of your little Court are so expensive to you. Nor do I know what to advise. I rather am against your buying annuities. Pray do not go and game in India Stock. My hopes are, that your Court will soon grow older. The frisks of a young reign never last. Princes take root in their capital after their first vagaries are over. Ministers do not love to gallop about; and if these peregrinations are burdensome to you, what must they be to the Court itself? The finances will fail, and they have no Bengal to draw upon. There will come lectures from Vienna, and you will sit down quietly again in Via de' Santi Apostoli.

My Lady Orford, I hear, is stopped short at Milan, and does not talk of coming these six-months. If she has tapped a new city, I shall not wonder if she never comes. Adieu! I have been writing in the dark, and do not know whether you can read my letter; I find I cannot read it myself.

## LETTER CXLIV.

Calais, Oct. 8, 1769.

You see, my dear sir, I am impatient to gather up the thread of our correspondence, which my journey to Paris interrupted. I have not, in truth, all the merit I could wish in beginning my letter two or three days before it can set out (for I intend it shall not be fit to send from hence), but here I am, locked up by a favourable wind, a very tantalizing circumstance. This favourable gale keeps all the vessels on the other coast, and will not suffer a single one to step and fetch me. However, I shall wait here, and not return to Paris, like my Lady Orford. Do you know, that she has literally been here twice, and whether from fear, or from illness, as she pretended, went back to Paris, and, I believe, before I left it, was on her return to Italy. I heard of nobody that saw her, but my cousin the Minister,* and Madame Geoffrin, who was not at all flattered with this wise woman from the East coming to worship her, but gave me a ridiculous account of the *empressement* and homage of the countess, who kissed her all over with a pilgrim's fervour. She described, too, a poor emaciated, low-spirited knight of St. Stephen,† who is said to be a *savant*, but who, Madame Geoffrin thinks, wasted in the occult sciences.

* Robert Walpole, fourth son of Horatio, first Lord Walpole, Chargé des Affaires at Paris.

† Cavalier Mozzi.

Who is this poor Paladin? and did you ever hear of a more absurd expedition?

The absurdity of the French is not inferior. Instead of vaunting his military prowess, they cry down Paoli as a rank coward. I own I think he has not dignified the catastrophe of his story, and I shall admire him still less, if it is true, as the French say, that he has secured a great fortune on the Continent; but sure it is not their business to lower their own conquest. The Prince de Beauveau,* who is by no means the amiable man we thought he would prove, but at once full of all the pride and meanness of Versailles, told me that the Emperor, in a letter, had said of Paoli, *minuit præsentia famam.* I do not believe it; in the first place, because even a common-place quotation is a pitch above an emperor, and, in the second place, because you told me with what esteem the Emperor had spoken of him. By our papers, I find that his *præsentia* has not at all *minuited* his *famam chez nous.* You shall know more about him when I arrive. As yet I have not heard whether he joins Wilkes, or is enlisted by the Ministry against my Lord Chatham.

To be serious, I doubt affairs wear a very unpromising aspect; at least, I, who have heard nothing in my absence, collect so much from the newspapers; and if they strike me in that light, what effect will they have upon you at a greater distance! I lament this the more deeply, as I come from a place where I have

* Son to the Prince de Craon, President of the Council at Florence, where the Prince de Beauveau was brought up.

seen how much we are hated, and where I am certain there are such bad designs against us. The Duc de Choiseul will never forgive his inferiority in the late war: his ambition is unbounded; and if the times resemble those of Charles I., we shall find in him another Richelieu. I have no doubt of his having already tampered with Wilkes; but, as he dreads the predominant star of Lord Chatham, I dropped, as by accident, to a confidant of the Duc's, that if the latter did not wish a war, nothing could be so imprudent as to encourage Wilkes, whose faction would bring back Lord Chatham; and Lord Chatham, war.

You do not doubt, I suppose, of the restless ambition of Choiseul. Every step he takes marks that it is pointed at us. He has settled the limits of their several dominions both with Sardinia and the Empress-Queen; consequently avoided those rocks of offence. He has poured the Turks on Russia; and he is so fond of that exploit, that before me at his own house, he sent for a French gazette which he had dictated himself, and read it—it was to assert the advantages gained by the Ottomans. To his levity, in truth, I trust much. It is equal to his daring, and composes it. He is every instant on the point of falling by provoking Madame du Barri; and forgetting that his predecessor, the Cardinal de Bernis, was the sacrifice of his own insolence by insulting Madame de Pompadour. The Duc de Choiseul treads in the same steps. The present journey to Fontainebleau will, I think, decide the victory, unless the Duc bends; that is not without

probability: a fortnight ago the mistress sent for him to ask a favour for a dependent. He replied, she might come to him. She insisted, and he went; and stayed above an hour; and yet did not grant what she asked. However, the length of the visit did not look hostile. It is true, his sister, Madame de Grammont, and the Princess de Beauveau were absent. As their violence has blown up this flame, they will not easily suffer him to make his peace, by which their pride must be sacrificed; and as they will all be together at Fontainebleau, (and yet the Choiseul-women will not see or King or mistress,) it is a thousand to one but some *éclat* happens.

Madame de Mirepoix* is the soul of the opposite cabal; no hatred ever transcended that between her and her sister Beauveau. The Prince does not see his sister; but though so submissive a husband, trims, and is not ill with the mistress. May these gentle dames continue their animosities! I have a little hope in the Emperor, and that he will not be a quiet spectator of the ascendant France is re-assuming. We heard at Paris that some Austrian squadrons are marching into Poland, in consequence, it was thought, of the interview with the King of Prussia. How emperors fall in love with this man! I hope the Empress-Queen will not deprive him of another friend, as the Russian Empress did of the first. It hurts me to be forced to wish success to this latter Semiramis; but it is one of the curses

* Sister of the Prince de Beauveau.

of politics to couple one with those one hates; and what have I to do with politics? I have done with them, and am going back to trifle at Strawberry. Paris revived in me that natural passion, the love of my country's glory; I must put it out; it is a wicked passion, and breathes war. It is self-love and vanity at bottom, and insolence easily rekindles it. Well! I will go home, love my neighbour, and pray for peace.

Arlington Street, Oct. 13th.

I arrived the night before last; and do not find any reason to change my opinion on the state of this country. It approaches by fast strides to some great crisis, and to me never wore so serious an air, except in the Rebellion. Not professing prophecy from interested views, I shall be happy to be mistaken.

Paoli is much approved here. The Court have artfully adopted him, and at least crushed one egg on which faction, and her brood-hen, Mrs. Macaulay, would have been very glad to have sat. He prefers being well with the government that protects him.

There is no confirmation of Austrian squadrons entering Poland, but the Russians have certainly beaten the Turks considerably, before Prince Gallitzin's recall arrived. Part of their fleet is on the coast of Yorkshire. Sir Edward Hawke has no doubt of its mastering Constantinople at once, if it arrives there. The plan is said to be the Empress's own, against the opinion of her council. Adieu! pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

## LETTER CXLV.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 6, 1769.

BEFORE I receive your answer about him, I must tell you that I have seen your friend Paoli. I found him last week at Court, and could not believe it when I was told who he was. I had stood close by him for some minutes, taking him for an English, or at least, for a Scotch officer. Nobody sure ever had an air so little foreign! He was dressed in scarlet and gold, and the simplicity of his whole appearance had not given me the slightest suspicion of anything remarkable in him. Afterwards, in the circle, as he again stood by me, he asked me some indifferent question, without knowing me. I told him, without naming myself, that you were my particular friend. He said he had written many letters to you, but believed they had all been intercepted. I replied, I would do him justice and tell you so. The King and Queen both took great notice of him. He has just made a tour to Bath, Oxford, &c., and was everywhere received with much distinction; so Mrs. Macaulay, it seems, has not laid him under an interdict.

I know not what to say to you upon politics. The imprudence of postponing the Parliament till after Christmas has given time for a large number of petitions, and more perhaps will follow, yet I do not think the general spirit so violent as it should seem from these

appearances. It is impossible but some mob may be assembled everywhere to sign a petition, and then such petition is called the sense of the country, though in many it is nothing less; and besides the Scotch counties, the majority have not petitioned. The Court will, nay must, resist the dissolution of the Parliament, and, if the members are not frightened for their re-elections, they must be strongly against such a measure: their seats have too recently cost them more than they can afford. A dissolution would be big with every evil imaginable. Yet I fear the tempest is mounted too high to evaporate without some serious mischief. The city of London is full of faction. In short, the evils of vast wealth, luxury, licence, and ambition, are ripened to a head. These natural causes have operated more to our present disorders than any specific reason. The times have produced the crisis, not particular men. They are times out of which considerable men will grow—some great—I hope some good: but few, I think, of the present actors will be the better for the confusions we have in prospect. I sit on the beach and contemplate the storm, but have not that apathy of finding that

"Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis," &c.

I love the constitution I am used to, and wish to leave it behind me; and Roman as my inclinations are, I do not desire to see a Cæsar on the stage, for the pleasure of having another Brutus; especially as Cæsars are more prolific than Brutuses.

I seemed to have judged right, when I thought

Fontainebleau would produce some crisis in the French Ministry too. The letters from Paris look as if the mistress gained ground. The turn in favour of the Russians is another heavy blow to the Duc de Choiseul. We persuade ourselves that nothing can stop the Czarina's progress by land. I have not so extraordinary an opinion of what her fleet will do. Only seven of her ships have yet arrived on our coasts. They are sailed away to the Mediterranean. But I have not much faith in crusades; and yet I think they will do more than if *they* had faith.

I hear *ma belle Sœur** is at Lyons, and intends to visit us in the spring. I do not know why she should think the sea less tremendous in May than in September. Lord Pembroke is not yet returned, though replaced in the King's Bedchamber. As he was turned out for running away with one young woman of fashion, I suppose he was restored for carrying off another.

Lord Bute is said to be extremely ill again, and to be again going abroad. The public will think his illness of the nature of Lord Holland's, a fever raised by the petitions. It is a proverb, that gold may be bought too dear. Favour and gold both cost dear at present. Wilkes and Madame du Barri are violent lessons of what the most unthought-of objects may bring about. Who, that saw either of them seven years ago, expected that England and France would talk of nothing else? Great men see nothing but the great that are in their way. Lord Bute, on the late

* The Countess of Orford, Margaret Rolle.

King's death, apprehended nobody but Lord Chatham. Methinks it would make a pretty Persian tale. Sultan Nourmanzor, a very potent monarch, was yet kept in continual alarms by the King of the Black Mountain, which hung over his territories, and from which he was threatened with daily invasion. He determined to deliver himself from so formidable an enemy, and assembling a mighty army, resolved to make himself master of the mountain. As he marched at the head of his troops, for he was a very brave Prince, he stumbled over a small pebble that lay in his way, and being unwieldy and encumbered with his robes, he could not recover himself, but falling flat on his face, a prodigious diamond that was set in the front of his turban, was beaten into his forehead, and occasioned a dangerous wound. The unskilfulness of his surgeons rendered it mortal. The pebble was picked up and presented to the monarch of the mountain, and, by the superstition of the mountaineers, was reckoned an amulet, and preservative against all the dangers of the state, nor would they exchange it for the diamond that was the more immediate cause of the death of their enemy. The pebble could not have hurt him, if he had not possessed the diamond. Adieu!

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LETTER CXLVI.

Arlington Street, Nov. 30, 1769.

If I had writ to you last week, I should have told you that the scene brightens up for the Court,

that the petitions begin to grow ridiculous, and that the Opposition have succeeded lately in no one material point. But as our climate is changeable, some new clouds have appeared in the sky. The Irish are the new actors, and will give trouble; though they began their session with a complaisance not much expected from them, considering how wrong their heads are. After voting the very necessary augmentation of three thousand men, they have thrown out a money bill, and it is a question whether their Parliament must not be prorogued with a high hand. As any national calamity is a gain to aspiring patriots, this *contretems* is very pleasing to ours. Then the talk of a war has done my Lord Chatham more good than hellebore. It is worth putting off a fit of madness, when one has a chance of being distracted upon a larger scale. I do not seriously think France ready for war, but we are strangely tempting; and as they outsee everything they hear, they will be apt to think us in greater confusion than we are. Yet, if they have tolerable intelligence, they must know that we have a fleet to make their hearts ache. Our navy never was so formidable, and in such brilliant order.

By the letters you must have received, you will have found how punctual I have been from the moment of my return. I believe I have received all yours. The last shocked me with the account of the French barbarities in Corsica. Why are they not trumpeted all over Europe? Cowardice in the attack was too naturally followed by cruelty after con-

quest — yet we call Iroquois barbarians! I believe Choiseul thoroughly exasperated, but did not think he had so feminine a mind. Nothing has answered but their diminutive triumph over the poor Corsicans. They are totally baffled in Sweden; and nothing ever answered worse than the holy Turkish war they have excited against the Czarina — yet methinks I wish her fleet was not so long hobbling into the Mediterranean! If the Pope has disappointed France and Spain, he has done no more than I foretold. He imitated the lowly virtues of Sixtus Quintus before his exaltation too much, not to end a Jesuit. Is it true that he cites the King of Prussia as an intercessor for the order?

The Duc de Choiseul maintains his ground against the mistress. She has lately been so well bred as, when at whist with the King, to make faces at the Minister, if he was her partner. Solomon thought this a little too strong, and has reprimanded his beloved. Yet, considering that he loves canticles better than war, I should think she would recover her advantages if the Minister should involve the pacific monarch in another war.

You may imagine that we have no kind of news but politics, considering how much we have of the latter. It is our meat, drink, and clothing—meat to our printers, drink to our Ministers, who settle all over a bottle, and is intended for clothing to our patriots. We have always talked of the goodness of our constitution. It must be a very tough one, if it can stand all its distempers and all its physicians.

The latter have not even the modesty of the Pharisees. None of them blush to cast the first stone at a sister sinner: nor does the sister obey the precept, Go and sin no more.

I have heard the true history of a certain Countess's uncertain wanderings. It seems, there is a Cavalier Mozzi, who, you must know, attends her perigrinations, as Cytheris did Antony's; but who not having it so much in his power to contribute to her pleasures, pleads very bad health, though even beyond the truth. I should not have thought her likely to be governed by an *epuisé*—but so it is. He has enriched himself to her cost, and fearing that her son might cross his interest, dragged her back twice from Calais. This came from a physician who accompanied them, and is now here; and who affirms that the cavalier often pressed him to be of parties at houses of pleasure, inconsistent with the fidelity of a true knight.

I believe I did not tell you how I was diverted at Paris with Monsieur d'Aubeterre, their late Ambassador at Rome. I was taking notice that all the new houses at Paris were built *à la Grecque.* He said, with all the contempt that ignorance feels when it takes itself for knowledge. "Bon! there is nothing in that: it is all stolen from the frieze of the Pantheon." With much difficulty I discovered that he thought the Doric fret comprehended all Greek architecture. This was after passing six years at Rome. As all other nations observe most what they have never seen before, the French never look but at what they have been used

to see all their lives. If something foreign arrives at Paris, they either think they invented it, or that it has always been there. It is lucky for us that D'Aubeterres are common among them. Adieu!

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## LETTER CXLVII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 31, 1769.

I WROTE to you on the first of this month, and am now going to write on the last of it, to close a year that has laid so many ominous eggs. Whether the next will crush or hatch them, we shall soon have some chance of foreseeing. In some respects, the prospect is a little mended. The petitions have contracted an air of ridicule from the ridiculous undertakers that have been forced to parade into different counties to supply the place of all the gentlemen, who have disdained to appear and countenance them. Lord Chatham, however, who is so necessitous that he is forced to put to sea again, and to hope for a storm, dresses out the cause in as big words as he can; but as Wilkes's *virtue* is more in fashion than his lordship's *eloquence*, and as that martyr has quarrelled, in print, with both Demosthenes and Cicero, Chatham and Grenville, the two latter gain no popularity. The riots, that were so hopefully nursed up against the execution of the weavers, were very nearly falling on the heads of the tribunes, Townshend and Sawbridge; and they were glad at the second to pacify the waves; *praestat componere.* Ireland, that was on the point

of falling into the last confusion by a prorogation of the Parliament, which the Opposition had incurred the penalty of, by rejecting a trifling money-bill before the capital money-bills were passed, is saved by the prorogation being prudently deferred till this great object was carried, and a prorogation now would have very little consequence.

It is not less fortunate that the extreme distress of France prevents her from interfering (take notice I say *openly*) in our confusions. Monsieur du Chatelet is returned, as mild and pacific as if Sir Edward Hawke was lying before Brest with our late thunderbolt in his hand. Their distress for money is certainly extreme. Dinvaux, Choiseul's favourite Comptroller-General, has been forced to resign, *re infectâ*, and it is said that the Duc declined to name another, urging, that having recommended the two last to no purpose, he desired the chancellor might find one. As Maupeou is of the opposite faction, his naming the new Comptroller-General has but an ill look for the minister—at least it is plain that Choiseul sees the impossibility of making brick without straw, and chooses to miscarry no more. I have been told here, that even their army is unpaid. I may add, to the amendment of our prospect, that the city itself has taken alarm, and does not care to give itself up to the new levellers. The latter having attempted to change the Common-Council this Christmas, have not succeeded in carrying above eight new members.

This is all mighty well: symptoms are comforts,

not cures. Opposition threatens, grave men shake their heads; many fancy they fear, and many do fear. The best observers see no attention, no system, and truly very slender abilities in the opposite scale; yet I think the ferment will dissipate. I have seen the Pretender at Derby, the House of Lords striding to aristocracy at the end of the last reign, the Crown making larger steps at the beginning of this. The mob are now led on to the destruction of the constitution: why should the people, the least formidable part, though the most impetuous in the onset, be more successful than the other branches! The whole legislature, too, is now engaged in one cause.

Methinks these various vibrations of the scale show how excellently well the Constitution is poised. But what signifies anticipating what nine days will give some light into? Yet, Administration has a difficult game to play, when both great firmness and great temper are absolutely necessary. The licentiousness of abuse surpasses all example. The most savage massacre of private characters passes for sport; but we have lately had an attack made on the King himself, exceeding the North Briton. Such a paper has been printed by the famous Junius, whoever he is, that it would scarce have been written before Charles I. was in Carisbrook Castle. The Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland are as little spared; the former for having taken a wife for himself—so says the North Briton; observe, *I* do not say so; and the latter, for having taken another man's—for opposite actions are equally criminal in the spectacles of Opposition, the

two glasses of which are always made, the one to see black as white, the other white as black, and also both to see that white and black are both black. To be sure, the younger Highness has had the mishap of being surprised, at least *once*, with my Lady Grosvenor, who is actually discarded by her lord. Indeed there was none of that proof which my Lady Townshend once said there was in another case, when, being asked if there was any proof, she said, "Lord, child, she was all over proof." In the present case, the lovers were *only* locked into a room together.

Well! we are not singular. Another Junius has appeared in Portugal. There it seems they write satires with a club—the first instance, I suppose, of thrashing a King. His Majesty received two blows on his shoulder and his arm, intended, *à la Junienne*, at his head. The Queen instantly called for a gun to shoot the bruiser herself. "No," said the King, "arrest him." They tell a melancholy story for the assassin; that, having lost a commission, he gave a memorial to the King, who bade him give it to the Secretary at War, which the poor creature did not think a likely method of redress. He was then prosecuted for not paying his tax out of nothing. Despair carried him to the Fountain Head; yet I doubt M. d'Œyras will discover a plot, and lop some more noble heads. I have often said, and oftener think, *that this world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel*—a solution of why Democritus laughed and Heraclitus wept. The only gainer is history, which has constant opportunities of showing the various ways in which men can

contrive to be fools and knaves. The Record pretends to be written for instruction, though to this hour no mortal has been the better or wiser for it. Adieu!

P.S. Jan. 2, 1770.

Last night we heard that the Lord-Lieutenant has prorogued the Irish Parliament for three months; but, fortunately, the money bills were passed first.

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## LETTER CXLVIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 10, 1770.

THE great day is over, and you will not be sorry to hear the event of it in both Houses. Without doors everything was quiet, except some cries in favour of Wilkes. Lord Chatham, who, *Lord Temple* said, was grown so violent that *he* could not *moderate* him, made his appearance and two long speeches, but, like an old beauty in an unfashionable dress, which became her in her youth, he found that his charms were no longer killing. Lord Mansfield answered his first speech, and Lord Sandwich defied any lord in the House to make sense out of the second. The object of the day was to create a breach between the two Houses, by an amendment proposed by Lord Chatham to the address in which the House should inquire into the grievance of the Middlesex election. Their Lordships were so little disposed to quarrel with their good brethren the Commons, though the Chancellor * himself laboured the point *against* the Court, that at ten at

* Lord Camden.

night the motion was rejected by an hundred to thirty-six. Old Myra, in her fardingale, will probably not expose herself again to neglect this session.

The other House sat till one in the morning, where the Court also triumphed; though Lord Granby and the Solicitor-General Dunning deserted to the minority; yet the latter were but 138 to 254. Thus ends the mighty bluster of petitions; which, notwithstanding all the noise and labour bestowed on them, have not yet been presented from about nine or ten counties of the fifty-two. They would come limping now to very little purpose. The most serious part is the defection of Lord Granby; for though he has sunk his character by so many changes, a schism in the army would be very unpleasant, especially as there are men bad enough to look towards rougher divisions than parliamentary. I hope the Ministers will have sense and temper enough to stop the progress of this wound. I shall not think them very wise if they dismiss the Chancellor. Such union in the whole legislature will reduce the present factions to insignificance, if not attended by presumption and excess of confidence. The clouds that hung over us are certainly dispelled by the success of yesterday; but, as folly assembled them, it may assemble them again. Yet, when I say clouds are dispersed, you will understand I mean only those vapours drawn up into petitions. Where so many caldrons full of passions are boiling, they are not extinguished by one wet sheet of votes.

Still it is most fortunate that France is so utterly

unable to profit of our difficulties. Dinvaux, M. de Choiseul's favourite Comptroller-General, has been obliged to resign ; yet I believe the defect of resources was more in their circumstances than in the man. Madame du Barri has been raining honours and preferments on her creatures: Madame de Mirepoix has obtained *les grandes entrées;* so has the Comte de Broglie ; and Monsieur de Castries has had a new military post created for him. These look to me as signals fixed to warn the minister to resign.

Much, I own, I do not expect from the Russian fleet, though I do not believe in the great naval force which, the French pretend, is prepared at Constantinople. It will be unlucky for the faithful, if the Czarina does demolish the Ottoman Empire, that the present generation will not trouble themselves to prove this æra foretold by the Revelations. The abasement of the Pope is a terrible counterpart to such a triumph.

Friday, 12th.

Though the Court is singing Io Pæans, the campaign is far from being at an end. A most unheard-of attack has been made on the House of Commons. Sir George Savile,* a man of great fortune, spotless character, and acute though injudicious head, has twice told them to their faces that they sit illegally, having betrayed their trust, and that he was ready to receive the punishment for telling them so. Burke, not quite so rich, nor immaculate, but of better abi-

* See Sir George Savile's Speech in Cavendish's Debates.—Ed.

lities, has twice said as much, and allowed that he ought to be sent to the Tower for what he said, but knew their guilt was too great to let them venture to commit him. Hitherto this language has been borne; but as there is not so great a mule as a martyr, I have no doubt but these two saints will insist on receiving the crown of glory; and, it is said; many more will demand the honour of sharing their cross. This will be a more respectable rubric than Wilkes's. We shall see whether Saints Simon and Jude, or St. Beelzebub will have most followers. Nay, but this is very unpleasant! It urges fast to sanguinary decision. I hear too that the victors will certainly dismiss the Chancellor, and that Lord Granby will resign in consequence. More and more madness! What has the Ministry and Parliament to do, but to lie by and let all the provocation take its rise from the opposite faction? Is it wise to furnish sedition with reasons?

There is a tolerable episode opened in Ireland, where the Lord-Lieutenant has been forced to prorogue the Parliament for three months; so nearly do we tread in the steps of 1641! I sit by, unconnected with all parties, but viewing the whole with much concern, and wishing I could put my trust in any for delivering us out of these calamities; but I doubt it is too far gone to subside without a convulsion; and in what *can* a convulsion end but in the destruction of our constitution? What hopes has liberty, whether Charles or Oliver prevail? As some revolution may happen any

day, be cautious for your own sake what you reply to me. I always say less than I could, because I consider how many post-house ordeals a letter must pass; and I am not desirous that our enemies should know more than it is vain to attempt to keep from them. Adieu!

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## LETTER CXLIX.

Arlington Street, Jan. 18, 1770.

AFFAIRS are so serious, and in so critical a situation, that I am sure you would not think my letters too frequent if I wrote every post. Nothing proves the badness of generals, like an ill use of a great victory. Ours have not hurt their own success by neglecting to pursue it, but by pursuing it too far. Lord Huntingdon* was turned out the next day, not for having joined the enemy, but merely for having absented himself: for him, he has played the fool; he has no strength of his own, and had no support but the King; and so falls unpitied. Lord Bristol† was immediately transferred from the Privy Seal to the Groom of the Stole. Lord Coventry,‡ already more than wavering towards the Opposition, seized that pretence of quarrelling, and resigned his post in the Bedchamber.

A more unlucky event, is the resignation of the Duke of Beaufort,§ who took up the same minute for giving up his Mastership of the Horse to the Queen,

* Francis Hastings. † George William Hervey.
‡ George William Coventry. § Henry Somerset.

because he could not wrench the lieutenancy of two Welsh counties from Morgan of Tredegar, the old Whig enemy of his house, and the more potent in Parliament. However, as the Duke was the first convert of his family from Jacobitism, his defection is to be lamented, and may carry back some of the Tories.

But the most imprudent step has been the dismission of the Chancellor, and that before any preparation was made for a successor. The Seals were indeed privately offered to Lord Mansfield, who refused them, but published the offer; and then to Mr. Yorke; but the Chancellor heard the news by common report, before he had received the least notification of his disgrace. Though I believe he did not intend to remain in office, these slights will not have soothed him. They have hurried on, too, the resignation of Lord Granby, who yesterday gave up the command of the Army and the Ordnance, only reserving his regiment of Blues.

You may imagine how these events have raised the spirits and animosity of the Opposition; but the greatest blow is yet to come. Mr. Yorke, the night before last, absolutely declined the Seals, though the great object of his life and of his variations; but terror and Lord Rockingham pulled more forcibly the other way. There is nobody else; the Chief-Justice Wilmot's health will not allow him to take them, and the Attorney-General cannot be spared from the House of Commons, where it is supposed Dunning, the Solicitor-General, will follow his friend the Chancellor, especially as he spoke on the same side the first day. When the Seals

go a-begging, and the army is abandoned by the popular general, you will not think the circumstances of Administration very flourishing. Well! you will not be more astonished than I was yesterday, at four o'clock, to hear that Mr. Yorke had just accepted, and is Chancellor. The rage of the Opposition speaks the importance of this acquisition to the Court. It will be great indeed if it stops the tide of resignations. The Ministers have gained still more time by an accident; the Speaker* has been seized with a paralytic disorder, and is thought dying. Yesterday he sent his resignation and mace to the House, which is accordingly adjourned to next Monday to consider of a successor, by which time, I suppose, the vacant employments will be filled up. No fewer than four earls have asked to be Master of the Horse to the Queen, Essex, Carlisle, Waldegrave, and Powis; a proof that things are not thought desperate. That the Opposition are so, and intend to make the nation so, is but too evident. Their speeches are outrageous, and it is not their fault that some of them have not been sent to the Tower. In short, the option seems to lie between the greatest violences, or a change of Administration and a dissolution of Parliament, the latter of which, I think, would not let in all other evils upon us.

Friday, 19th.

I had not time yesterday to finish my letter. The Court has recovered from its consternation and is taking measures of defence. Another great thorn is drawn out of its side, Sir Fletcher Norton, who vo-

* Sir John Cust.

mited fire and flame on Yorke's promotion, having consented to be Speaker of the House of Commons. I do not yet hear whether the Opposition will set up a candidate for the chair against him. Nothing can exceed the badness of his character even in this bad age; yet I think he can do less hurt in the Speaker's chair than anywhere else. He has a roughness and insolence, too, which will not suffer the licentious speeches of these last days, and which his predecessor did not dare to reprimand. As sedition is the word, perhaps it is not unlucky that some capital rogues should be opposed to others; they know each other's weak parts.

A country is undone before people distinguish between affected and real virtue, and Cato is dead before anybody minds him. I could write a volume of reflections or comparisons, but to what purpose? Writings impel, but can restrain nobody. Every Clodius of the hour takes the name of Cato to himself, and bestows his own name on his enemy. Truth surmounts but an hundred years afterwards; is then entombed in history, and appears as flat as, or less interesting than, the lies with which it is surrounded and has been overwhelmed. Everybody talks of the Constitution, but all sides forget that the Constitution is extremely well, and would do very well, if they would but let it alone. Indeed it must be a strong constitution, considering how long it has been quacked and doctored. If it had a fever, it was a slow one. Its present physicians imitate the Faculty so servilely, that they seem to think the wisest step is to convert the slow fever

into a high one; then, you know, the patient is easily cured—or killed.

Considering how much I have seen, perhaps I ought not to be so easily alarmed, but a by-stander is more apt to be serious than those who are heated and engaged in the game. I have the weakness of loving national glory; I exulted in the figure we made in the last war; but as I am connected with neither Court nor Opposition, I enjoy the triumphs of neither, which are made at the expense of the whole. Their squabbles divert us from attention to greater interests, and their views are confined to the small circle of themselves and friends. If the quarrel becomes very serious, one knows, whichever side prevails, the Crown in the long run must predominate; and what matters it which party or faction shall then be uppermost?

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LETTER CL.

Arlington Street, Monday, Jan. 22, 1770.

WHAT a strange event! Though my letters tread on each other's heels, they can scarce keep up with the rapid motion of the times. Mr. Yorke is dead!—yes, the new Chancellor! He kissed the King's hand for the Great Seal on Wednesday night, and expired between five and six on Saturday evening. It was Semele perishing by the lightnings she had longed for. When you have recovered your surprise, you will want to know the circumstances. I believe the following

are nearly the truth. To be second Chancellor in succession in his own house had been the great object of Mr. Yorke's life; and his family were not less eager for it. This point had occasioned much uncertainty in their conduct. In general, they were attached to Lord Rockingham, but being decent, and naturally *legal*, they had given into none of the violences of their party, particularly on the petitions, all the brothers absenting themselves on the first day of the session. When the Great Seal, on the intended dismission of Lord Camden, was offered to Mr. Yorke, his connections, and dread of abuse, weighed so strongly against his ambition, that he determined to refuse it. Some say that his brother Lord Hardwicke advised; others, that he dissuaded the acceptance. Certain it is, that he had given a positive refusal both to the King and the Duke of Grafton, and that the Earl had notified it to Lord Rockingham. Within two hours after, the King prevailed on Yorke to accept.

The conflict occasioned in his mind by these struggles, working on a complexion that boiled over with blood, threw him into a high fever on Wednesday night, and a vomiting ensuing on Thursday morning, he burst a blood-vessel, and no art could save him. The Cerberus of Billingsgate had opened all its throats, but must shut them, for the poor man had accepted handsomely, without making a single condition for himself; I do not reckon the Peerage;* as a Chancellor must have it, or is

* Lord Morden: but he died three days before the patent could be made out.—Ed.

a mute at the head of the House of Lords. The blow is heavy on the Administration. The Chief Justice Wilmot, it is thought, will be prevailed upon to accept the Seals, but at present they must be put into commission, for the Chancery cannot stand still.

You are a sort of man whom virtue can comfort under ill success, and therefore I will tell you what will charm you. The King offered the Mastership of the Ordnance, on Lord Granby's resignation, to Mr. Conway, who is only Lieutenant-General of it. He said he had lived in friendship with Lord Granby, and would not profit of his spoils; but, as he thought he could do some essential service in the office, where there are many abuses, if His Majesty would be pleased to let him continue as he is, he would do the bnsiness of the office without accepting the salary. The King replied, "You are a phenomenon! I can satisfy nobody else, and you will not take even what is offered to you." I believe his Majesty would not find the same difficulty with many patriots. As extremes meet, even Sir Fletcher Norton acts moderation. He was destined for Speaker of the House of Commons. On Yorke's death, it was expected that he would again push to be Chancellor. No such thing: he says he will not avail himself of the distresses of Government; but, having consented to be Speaker, will remain so; and is to be installed to-day, the Opposition not being able to find a concurrent. There!—there is Cassius as self-denying as Brutus! Lord Waldegrave*

* John third Earl of Waldegrave.

is Master of the Horse to the Queen : the other employments are not yet filled ; but, as I begin my letter to-day, and it is not to set out till to-morrow, I may have half a volume more to write, if the times keep up the same tone of vivacity.

Tuesday.

Sir Fletcher Norton is Speaker. Two or three of the Opposition, only to mark their disgust to him, proposed the younger Thomas Townshend, one as little qualified for the office as you are, and whose consent they had not asked. He disavowed them, and Sir Fletcher was chosen by 237 to 121 : exactly the same majority as on the first day ; so that the Court maintains its strength, notwithstanding so many unfavourable accidents. The same day, Lord Rockingham wretchedly, and Lord Chatham, in his old brilliant style, moved, to inquire into the state of the nation, which was not opposed, and is to be discussed on Thursday.

In the meantime, resignations revive. Dunning, the Solicitor-General ; Hussey, Attorney-General to the Queen ; James Grenville, Vice-Treasurer to the Queen, and two Lords of the Admiralty, have given up their places ; and, what is worse, no Chancellor is to be found. Lord Chatham, who, four years and a half ago, was turned out of Lord Rockingham's house, has been to wait on the latter, and they are the best friends in the world, as far as common hostility can make them ; but the Marquis is firm in insisting on the Treasury, which the Grenvilles will not waive. It is a most distracted scene! People cry where

will it end? I say, where will it begin? I know where it will end; in the destruction of this free constitution.

Should anything happen, I shall write to you with more circumspection. I condemn both sides, or rather, all sides. I have not a connection with any thing called Minister; but as the well-being of the House of Commons depends on this Administration, I must wish their success. If the House of Commons is blasted by authority, what is left? Must we pass through a mob Parliament to confusion, and thence to absolute power? I tremble. Adieu!

P.S. If the Parliament is dissolved, Lord Chatham and Lord Rockingham may separately flatter themselves, but the next Parliament will be Wilkes's.

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### LETTER CLI.

Arlington Street, Jan. 30, 1770.

I DO not know how the year will end, but, to be sure, it begins with as many events as ever happened to any one of its predecessors. The Duke of Grafton has resigned: in a very extraordinary moment indeed; in the midst of his own measures, in the midst of a session, and undefeated. It is true, his last victory was far from being so complete as the former; and hence, as Horatio says,* *have the talkers of this populous city* taken occasion to impute this

* Not Horatio, but the Fair Penitent.—ED.

sudden retreat to as sudden a panic. You must know, that last Friday, upon a question on that endless topic the Middlesex election, the Court had a majority, at past three in the morning, of only four and forty. The expulsion of the Chancellor, the resignation of Lord Granby, and of so many others, and much mal-adroitness in stating the question on the Court-side, easily accounted for that diminution in the numbers; and yet, though I believe that that defalcation determined this step, I know it was not a new thought. Whenever the current did not run smooth, his Grace's first thought has been to resign. When Mr. Yorke refused to accept, the fit returned violently: when he did accept, the wind changed; and I believe I gave you an obscure hint of the extreme importance of that acceptance. Mr. Yorke's precipitate death unhinged all again; the impossibility of finding another Chancellor fixed the wind in the resigning corner, and the slender majority overset the vessel quite. In short, it is over. A very bad temper, no conduct, and obstinacy always ill-placed, have put an end to his Grace's administration.

What will follow is impossible to say. In the meantime Lord North is first Minister. He is much more able, more active, more assiduous, more resolute, and more fitted to deal with mankind. But whether the apparent, nay glaring timidity of the Duke may not have spread too general an alarm, is more than probable; and there is but the interval of to-day to take any measures, as the question of

Friday must be reported to the House to-morrow; whence, at least, the lookers-out may absent themselves till the trump is turned up. The fear of a dissolution of Parliament may keep a large number together, and the fluctuation of probability between Lord North, Lord Chatham, and Lord Rockingham, may occasion a confusion of which the Government may profit. The King, in the meantime, is much to be pitied; abandoned where he had most confidence, and attacked on every other side. I write to-day, because the post goes out, and I choose to give you the earliest intelligence of such a material event; but the letter I shall certainly send you on Friday, will tread upon a little firmer ground.

I have received an odd indirect overture myself, not from Administration nor Opposition, but from France. M. de Choiseul has a great desire that I should be Ambassador at that Court. As no man upon earth is less a Frenchman, as you know, than I am, I did not at all taste the proposal, nay, not his making it. I sent him word in plain terms that he could not have desired a person that would suit him less; that whatever private connections or friendships I have in France, however grateful I may be for the kindness I have met with there, yet, the moment I should be Ambassador, he would find me more haughty and inflexible than all the English put together; and that though I wish for peace between the two countries, I should be much more likely to embroil them than preserve union, for that

nothing upon earth could make me depart from the smallest punctilio, in which the honour of my nation should be concerned. I do not think he will desire me to be sent thither.

As this letter is but a prologue to the ensuing scenes, you will excuse my making it short. You may depend on my frequency till things are settled into some system. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLII.

Arlington Street, Friday, Feb. 2, 1770.

WEDNESDAY, the very critical day is over, and the Administration stands. The Opposition flattered themselves with victory, and the warmest friends of the Court expected little better than a drawn battle, yet the majority for the latter was forty. Few enough in conscience for triumph, but sufficient to make a stand with. Lord North pleased all that could bring themselves to be pleased: he not only spoke with firmness and dignity, but with good-humour; and fairly got the better of Colonel Barré, who attacked him with rudeness and brutality. Lord North has very good parts, quickness, great knowledge, and, what is as much wanted, activity. The impracticability of the Duke of Grafton's temper had contributed more to the present crisis than all the labours of all the factions. His friends were more discontented with him than even his enemies were. It

was impossible to choose a more distressful moment than he selected for quitting; and had the scale turned on Wednesday, I do not know where we should have been. The House of Commons contradicting itself, a reversal of the Middlesex election, a dissolution of Parliament, or the King driven to refuse it in the face of a majority! I protest I think some fatal event must have happened. Let the Constitution but be saved, the factions may squabble as they please. They are engaged at this moment at the House of Lords, but that is a very bloodless scene: my Lord Chatham will make as little impression there as in his expeditions to the Coast of France.

The people are perfectly quiet, and seem to have delegated all their anger to their representatives—*a proof that their representatives had instructed their constituents to be angry.* Wilkes is never mentioned, but as his name occurs in the debates on the Middlesex election. Yet I am far from thinking this Administration solidly seated. Any violence, or new provocation, may dislodge it at once. When they could reduce a majority of an hundred and sixteen to forty, in three weeks, their hold seems to be very slippery.

In the meantime, what a figure do we make in Europe! Who can connect with us? Nobody will. Nay, who can treat with us? Is every secret of every court to pass through the hands of every cabal in England? This goes to my heart, who, you know, wish to dictate to all the world, and to sit, a private citizen, in the Capitol, with more haughtiness than an

Asiatic monarch. All public ambition is lost in personal. It would soothe my pride a thousand times more to be great *by* my country than *in* it. It would flatter me more to walk on foot to Paris, and be reverenced as an Englishman, than to go thither Ambassador, with the Garter. This might have been! but it past; and what signifies all the rest? I was born with Roman insolence, and live *in fœce Romuli!*

The vivacity of this last month has so multiplied my letters, that their number must excuse the shortness of them.

If the present system settles into any stability, I shall relapse into my *monthly family-duty.* Should fresh changes happen, you are sure of being advertized. That strange event, Mr. Yorke's death, is already history, that is, forgotten. We give few things time to grow stale.

Where is the Russian fleet? The ships drop in, one by one, like schoolboys after their holidays; and none of them, I doubt, perfect in their lesson.

Our schoolboys, at least those just come from school, are much more expeditious.

The gaming at Almack's, which has taken the *pas* of White's, is worthy the decline of our Empire, or Commonwealth, which you please. The young men of the age lose five, ten, fifteen thousand pounds in an evening there. Lord Stavordale,* not one-and-twenty, lost eleven thousand there, last Tuesday, but recovered it by one great hand at hazard: he swore

* Eldest son of Stephen Fox, first Earl of Ilchester.

a great oath,—"Now, if I had been playing *deep*, I might have won millions." His cousin, Charles Fox, shines equally there and in the House of Commons. He was twenty-one yesterday se'nnight; and is already one of our best speakers. Yesterday he was made a Lord of the Admiralty. We are not a great age, but surely we are tending to some great revolution. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLIII.

Arlington Street, February 27, 1770.

It is very lucky, seeing how much of the tiger enters into the human composition, that there should be a good dose of the monkey too. If Æsop had not lived so many centuries before the introduction of masquerades and operas, he would certainly have anticipated my observation, and worked it up into a capital fable. As we still trade upon the stock of the ancients, we seldom deal in any other manufacture; and, though nature, after new combinations, lets forth new characteristics, it is very rarely that they are added to the old fund; else how could so striking a remark have escaped being made, as mine, on the joint ingredients of tiger and monkey? In France the latter predominates, in England the former; but, like Orozmades and Arimanius, they get the better by turns. The bankruptcy in France, and the rigours of the new Comptroller-General, are half forgotten, in the expecta-

tion of a new opera at the new theatre. Our civil war has been lulled asleep by a subscription-masquerade; for which the House of Commons literally adjourned yesterday. Instead of Fairfaxes and Cromwells, we have had a crowd of Henry the Eighths, Wolseys, Vandykes, and Harlequins; and because Wilkes was not mask enough, we had a man dressed like him, with a visor, in imitation of his squint, and a Cap of Liberty on a pole. In short, sixteen or eighteen young lords have given the town a masquerade; and politics, for the last fortnight, were forced to give way to habit-makers. The ball was last night at Soho; and, if possible, was more magnificent than the King of Denmark's. The bishops opposed: he of London formally remonstrated to the King, who did not approve it, but could not help him. The consequence was, that four divine vessels belonging to the holy fathers, alias their wives, were at this masquerade. Monkey again! A fair widow,* who once bore my whole name, and now bears half of it, was there, with one of those† whom the newspapers call *great personages*—he dressed like Edward the Fourth, she like Elizabeth Woodville, in grey and pearls, with a black veil. Methinks it was not very difficult to find out the meaning of those masks.

As one of my ancient passions, formerly, was masquerades, I had a large trunk of dresses by me. I dressed out a thousand young Conways‡ and Chol-

* Maria Walpole, Countess Dowager of Waldegrave; secondly, married to (†) William Henry Duke of Gloucester. Edward IV. married the widow of Lord Gray.

‡ Sons of Francis Earl of Hertford, Mr. Walpole's cousin german.

mondeleys,* and went with more pleasure to see them pleased than when I formerly delighted in that diversion myself. It has cost me a great headache, and I shall probably never go to another. A symptom appeared of the change that has happened in the people.

The mob was beyond all belief: they held flambeaux to the windows of every coach, and demanded to have the masks pulled off and put on at their pleasure, but with extreme good-humour and civility. I was with my Lady Hertford and two of her daughters, in their coach: the mob took me for Lord Hertford, and huzzaed and blessed me! One fellow cried out, "Are you for Wilkes?" another said, "D—n you, you fool, what has Wilkes to do with a masquerade?"

In good truth, that stock is fallen very low. The Court has recovered a majority of seventy-five in the House of Commons; and the party has succeeded so ill in the Lords, that my Lord Chatham has betaken himself to the gout, and appears no more. What Wilkes may do at his enlargement in April, I don't know, but his star is certainly much dimmed. The distress of France, the injustice they have been induced to commit on public credit, immense bankruptcies, and great bankers hanging and drowning themselves, are comfortable objects in our prospect; for one tiger is charmed if another tiger loses his tail.

There was a stroke of the monkey last night that will sound ill in the ears of your neighbour the Pope.

* Mr. Walpole's nephews.

The heir-apparent* of the House of Norfolk, a drunken old mad fellow, was, though a Catholic, dressed like a cardinal: I hope he was scandalized at the wives of our bishops.

So you agree with me, and don't think that the crusado from Russia will recover the Holy Land! It is a pity; for, if the Turks keep it a little longer, I doubt it will be the Holy Land no longer. When Rome totters, poor Jerusalem! As to your Count Orloff's denying the murder of the late Czar, it is no more than every felon does at the Old Bailey. If I could write like Shakspeare, I would make Peter's ghost perch on the dome of Sancta Sophia, and, when the Russian fleet comes in sight, roar, with a voice of thunder that should reach to Petersburgh,

"Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!"

We have had two or three simpletons return from Russia, charmed with the murderess, believing her innocent, *because* she spoke graciously to *them* in the drawing-room. I don't know what the present Grand Signior's name is, Osman, or Mustapha, or what, but I am extremely on his side against Catharine of Zerbst; and I never intend to ask him for a farthing, nor write panegyrics on him for pay, like Voltaire and Diderot; so you need not say a word to him of my good wishes. Benedict XIV. deserved my friendship, but being a sound Protestant, one would not, you know, make all Turk and Pagan and Infidel princes too familiar. Adieu!

* Charles Howard; afterwards Duke of Norfolk.

## LETTER CLIV.

Arlington Street, March 15, 1770.

THE troubles that seemed to have a little subsided, or that were, at least, repelled by the vigorous majorities in Parliament, have again broken out, and (like flames blown backward) with redoubled violence. As a prelude to what was to follow, rather as the word of battle, Lord Chatham some days ago declared to the Lords, that there is a *secret influence* (meaning the Princess) more mighty than Majesty itself, and which had betrayed or clogged every succeeding administration. His own had been sacrificed by it. In consequence of this denunciation, papers, to which the North Britons were milk and honey, have been published in terms too gross to repeat. *The Whisperer* and the *Parliamentary Spy* are their titles. Every blank wall at this end of the town is scribbled with the words, *Impeach the King's Mother;* and, in truth, I think her person in danger.

But the manifesto on which all seems to turn, is the remonstrance from the City. You will have seen it in the public papers, and certainly never saw a bolder declaration both against King and Parliament. Sixteen aldermen have protested against it, but could not stop it. The King, after some delay, received it yesterday on his throne. It was brought by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, accompanied by an immense multitude, decently however, except in hissing as they passed Carlton House.*

* The residence of the Princess Dowager in Pall Mall.

A few days ago, when the Sheriffs went to demand the acceptance of it, both Townshend and Sawbridge, it is said, behaved with provoking disrespect. The King read his answer with great dignity and calmness, and it was indeed drawn with extreme temper and firmness. Had as prudent an answer been given to the petitions, instead of mocking the people* with that nonsense on the horned cattle, much ill-humour had been prevented.

The crisis is now tremendous. Should the House of Commons, or both Houses, fall on the Remonstrance as it in a manner dares them to do, it is much to be apprehended that not only the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs will uphold their act, but that many lords and members will avow them, and demand to be included in the same sentence. The Tower, crammed with such proud criminals, will be a formidable scene indeed. The petitioning counties will certainly turn remonstrants. An association among them is threatened, and a general refusal by the party of paying the land-tax. In short, rebellion is in prospect, and in everybody's mouth. I, you know, have long foretold, that if some lenient measures were not applied, the confusion would grow too mighty to be checked.

It is not yet, I hope, too late for wisdom and temper to step in. I sigh when I hear any other language. The English may be soothed—I never read that they were to be frightened. The experience of ten years has shown, that harshness, and standing on the letter of defence,

* In the King's speech.

has but added to the ill-humour of the times. I have a great opinion of Lord North's prudence, and by the answer to the Remonstrance, I conceive that he sees the true and only means of quieting those distempers, it *being much easier for a King of England to disarm the minds of his subjects than their hands.* This is my creed, and all our history supports it.

Friday, 16th.

I was interrupted yesterday, since when the die is cast. Sir Thomas Clavering moved to address the King to lay the Remonstrance and his Answer before the House. The Lord Mayor, the two Sheriffs, and Alderman Trecothick avowed the hand they had had in that outrageous paper. Fortunately, no more members took the same part, and some of the best condemned it. The House, you may imagine, was full of resentment, and at eleven at night the Address was carried by 271 to 108 : a vast majority in the present circumstances, and composed, as you may guess, of many who abandoned the Opposition. The great point is still in suspense—what to do with the offenders. The wisest, because the most temperate, method that I have heard suggested is, to address the King to order a prosecution by the Attorney-General. Two others that have been mentioned, are big with every mischief—the Tower, or expulsion. Think of the three first magistrates of the city in prison, or of a new election for London! I pray for temper, but what can one expect when such provocation is given? I will write to you again next week, and I wish to send you better

news. I forget whether it was King David or King Solomon said it, but I often think of the wisdom of that expression, *A soft word turneth away anger.*

Pray be upon your guard against the person who told you that Johnson was the author of the false alarm. I believe he is; but the person * who told you so is a most worthless and dangerous fellow, and capable of any mischief. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLV.

Arlington Street, March 23, 1770.

Our storms rather loiter than disperse; but they have deceived me so often, that if I thought them blown over, I should be cautious of saying so. Lord North's temper and prudence has prevailed over much rash council; and will, I hope, at last, defeat the madness of both sides. There has not been much heat in the House of Commons. The Rockingham faction has left Lord Chatham's aground, and would not defend the indecency of the Remonstrance. This alarmed my Lord Mayor, and, though he affected to keep up his spirit, it sunk visibly. The House, you may be sure, resented the insult offered to them, and the majorities have been very great; yet has there been no personal punishment or censure, no dubbing of martyrs. The country gentlemen have even declared, that they will support the Court in no violence.

* Smollett.

This is very happy, at a time when the first overt act of violence on either side may entail long bloodshed upon us. The disavowal has given Lord Chatham a real or political fit of the gout; and he neither appeared yesterday in the House of Lords, when an address to the King against the Remonstrance was voted, nor at a sumptuous dinner and ball, given to the Opposition by the Lord Mayor. They passed in solemn procession, escorted by the Liverymen of London on horseback, from the Thatched-House Tavern, near St. James's, to the Mansion House, amidst thousands of people. At night, a small drunken mob, consisting, I believe, chiefly of glaziers and tallow-chandlers, obliged some houses at Charing Cross to put out some lights, and broke some windows, but dispersed of themselves in a quarter of an hour. These follies, however, exasperate; and both sides, I fear, grow too angry not to be glad to be enraged at any trifle: the chiefs of both not considering that, like other projectors, the first inventors of mischief never reap the profit. Laud, Strafford, Hampden, Pym, all perished before their manufactures were crowned with success. Cromwell and Clarendon, who came into their shops, got all the business.

Our weather is as perverse as the rest of the season. We have had a hard frost above this fortnight, which they say has killed all the peas and beans; but so they say every year, and of the fruit too. I suppose, if so much were not destroyed, we should be devoured by peas, beans, and apricots.

Lord Beauchamp has desired I would trouble you with a commission; it is to send him about six dozen of wine of Aleatico, and four dozen of the white Verdea. I knew you would undertake it with pleasure; you must draw upon me for the money, and I will pay your brother.

You know I have always some favourite, some successor of Patapan.* The present is a tanned black spaniel, called Rosette. She saved my life last Saturday night, so I am sure you will love her too. I was undressing for bed. She barked and was so restless that there was no quieting her. I fancied there was somebody under the bed, but there was not. As she looked at the chimney, which roared much, I thought it was the wind, yet wondered, as she had heard it so often. At last, not being able to quiet her, I looked to see what she barked at, and perceived sparks of fire falling from the chimney, and on searching farther perceived it in flames. It had not gone far, and we easily extinguished it. I wish I had as much power over the nation's chimney. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLVI.

Arlington Street, Thursday, April 19, 1770.

THE day so much apprehended of Wilkes's enlargement is passed without mischief. He was released late the night before last, and set out directly

* A favourite dog Mr. Walpole brought from Rome.

for the country. Last night several shops and private houses were illuminated, from affection, or fear of their windows, but few of any distinction, except the Duke of Portland's. Falling amidst the drunkenness of Easter week, riots were the more to be expected; yet none happened. Great pains had been taken to station constables, and the Light Horse were drawn nearer to town, in case of emergency. The Lord Mayor had enjoined tranquillity—as Mayor. As Beckford, his own house in Soho-square, was embroidered with "*Liberty*," in white letters three feet high. Luckily, the evening was very wet, and not a mouse stirred.

However, this delivery may give date to a fresh era. Wilkes has printed manifestoes against the House of Commons, designs to be sworn in as Alderman, and, they say, to demand his seat in Parliament. An approaching event will favour his designs. Lord Sandys has been overturned, and has fractured his skull. The succession of his son to the title vacates the seat of the latter for Westminster, and opens a new scene of rioting. Wilkes will not stand himself, adhering to his pretensions for Middlesex, but may name whom he pleases. The Court, I should think, would not oppose his nominee; and in that case there may be the less tumult.

Well! we must see now what turn this man's destiny will take: whether he will persist, and if he does, what the event will be; or whether he will not be abandoned by degrees, and sink into ob-

scurity. Except as a mere tool of faction, he has lost all hold but with the lower part of the people, while his own vanity and obstinacy make him most important in his own eyes, and may in reality have made him an enthusiast. Monsieur de la Chalotais, a man of real principles, does not triumph less. He has driven his tyrant, the Duc d'Aiguillon, to demand a trial, and it is now going on before the King at Versailles; an unprecedented compliment, and evidence of the Duke's favour. Yet he is fallen into a jaundice with vexation, after receiving a noble rebuff from the oppressed. Duclos was sent with the offer of 400,000 livres, of erecting his estate into a marquisate, and of ensuring the place of Procureur-General* to his son. La Chalotais was in bed when Duclos drew his curtains; he said immediately, "Mon ami, j'espère que vous ne venez pas me proposer des bassesses?" He refused everything; said he would persist in pursuing his oppressor for his own vindication till he had not a *sillon* left, and hoped his children would have spirit enough to go on with the suit. Such offers speak the innocence of the sufferer; and yet, having read the procedure, I think there is not the least probability in one of the charges, that of an attempt to have La Chalotais poisoned. It is glorious, however, to find that even in France the loftiest criminals cannot escape from the cry of the public!

* Procureur-General of the Parliament of Bretagne.

One of the King's daughters* is gone into a convent of Carmelites—the youngest. The King refused his consent for three months. Had he had as much more sense as was necessary, he should have abolished the order *in terrorem*, for I take for granted this is a machine played off by Mother Church to revive her credit.

Do you know that I am much scandalised by a paragraph in your last, where you say the Czarina was reduced to murder her husband by the option between that crime and a great empire? Is it possible that you can have given credit to the tales of her very accomplices? There was not a shadow of probability that the Czar intended to put her to death. His nature was most humane and beneficent, and her antecedent and subsequent murders too glaring and horrid proofs of her blackness, to leave one any doubt. There is great reason to believe she poisoned the late Czarina; and none but such simpletons as we have sent to Petersburgh, can be imposed on by the gross denial of her hand in the massacre of the Czar John.

My dear sir, leave it to Voltaire and the venal learned to apologize for that wretched woman. I am not dazzled with her code of laws, nor her fleets in the Archipelago. La Chalotais, in prison or exile, is venerable. Catharine will be detestable, though she should be crowned in St. Sophia, and act a farce of Christianity there. Pray deny her place in so pure a

* Madame Louise.

heart as your own. The proper punishment of mighty criminals is their knowing that they are, and must be for ever despised by the good. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLVII.

Strawberry Hill, May 6, 1770.

I DON'T know whether Wilkes is subdued by his imprisonment, or waits for the rising of Parliament, to take the field; or whether his dignity of Alderman has dulled him into prudence, and the love of feasting; but hitherto he has done nothing but go to city-banquets and sermons, and sit at Guildhall as a sober magistrate. What an inversion of the proverb, "Si ex quovis Mercurio fit lignum!" What do you Italians think of Harlequin Podestâ? In truth, his party is crumbled away strangely. Lord Chatham has talked on the Middlesex election till nobody will answer him; and Mr. Burke, Lord Rockingham's governor, has published a pamphlet that has sown the utmost discord between that faction and the supporters of the Bill of Rights. Mrs. Macaulay has written against it. In Parliament their numbers are shrunk to nothing, and the session is ending very triumphantly for the Court. But there is another scene opened of a very different aspect. You have seen the accounts from Boston. The tocsin seems to be sounded to America. I have many visions about that country, and fancy I see twenty empires and republics forming upon vast

scales over all that continent, which is growing too mighty to be kept in subjection to half a dozen exhausted nations in Europe. As the latter sinks, and the others rise, they who live between the æras will be a sort of Noahs, witnesses to the period of the old world and origin of the new. I entertain myself with the idea of a future senate in Carolina and Virginia, where their patriots will harangue on the austere and incorruptible virtue of the ancient English! will tell their auditors of our disinterestedness and scorn of bribes and pensions, and make us blush in our graves at their ridiculous panegyrics. Who knows but even our Indian usurpations and villanies may become topics of praise to American schoolboys? As I believe our virtues are extremely like those of our predecessors the Romans, so I am sure our luxury and extravagance are too.

What do you think of a winter-Ranelagh* erecting in Oxford Road, at the expense of sixty thousand pounds? The new bank, including the value of the ground, and of the houses demolished to make room for it, will cost three hundred thousand; and erected, as my Lady Townley† says, *by sober citizens too!* I have touched before to you on the incredible profusion of our young men of fashion. I know a younger brother who literally gives a flower-woman half a guinea every morning for a bunch of roses for the nosegay in his button-hole. There has lately been an auction of stuffed birds; and, as natural history is in fashion, there are physicians and others who paid forty

* The Pantheon. † In the comedy of the Provoked Husband.

and fifty guineas for a single Chinese pheasant: you may buy a live one for five. After this, it is not extraordinary that pictures should be dear. We have at present three exhibitions. One West, who paints history in the taste of Poussin, gets three hundred pounds for a piece not too large to hang over a chimney. He has merit, but is hard and heavy, and far unworthy of such prices. The rage to see these exhibitions is so great, that sometimes one cannot pass through the streets where they are. But it is incredible what sums are raised by mere exhibitions* of anything; a new fashion, and to enter at which you pay a shilling or half-a-crown. Another rage, is for prints of English portraits: I have been collecting them above thirty years, and originally never gave for a mezzotinto above one or two shillings. The lowest are now a crown; most, from half a guinea to a guinea. Lately, I assisted a clergyman† in compiling a catalogue of them; since the publication, scarce heads in books, not worth threepence, will sell for five guineas. Then we have Etruscan vases,‡ made of earthenware, in Staffordshire, from two to five guineas; and *or moulu*, never made here before, which succeeds so well, that a tea-kettle, which the inventor offered for one hundred guineas, sold by auction for one hundred and thirty. In short, we are at the height of extravagance and im-

* What would Horace Walpole have said to the great number of these sources of amusement in our days,—picture-galleries, dioramas, panoramas, cosmoramas, zoological gardens, and industrious fleas!—Ed.

† Mr. Granger's work is entitled "Biographical History."

‡ By the celebrated Wedgwood.—Ed.

provements, for we do improve rapidly in taste as well as in the former. I cannot say so much for our genius. Poetry is gone to bed, or into our prose; we are like the Romans in that too. If we have the arts of the Antonines,—we have the fustian also.

Well! what becomes of your neighbours, the Pope and Turk? is one Babylon to fall, and the other to moulder away? I begin to tremble for the poor Greeks; they will be sacrificed like the Catalans, and left to be impaled for rebellion, as soon as that vainglorious woman the Czarina has glutted her lust of fame, and secured Asoph by a peace, which I hear is all she insists on keeping. What strides modern ambition takes! *We* are the successors of Aurengzebe; and a virago under the Pole sends a fleet into the Ægean Sea to rouse the ghosts of Leonidas and Epaminondas, and burn the capital of the second Roman Empire! Folks now scarce meddle with their next door neighbours; as many English go to visit St. Peter's who never thought of stepping into St. Paul's.

I shall let Lord Beauchamp know your readiness to oblige him, probably to-morrow, as I go to town. The spring is so backward here that I have little inducement to stay; not an entire leaf is out on any tree, and I have heard a syren as much as a nightingale. Lord Fitzwilliam, who, I suppose is one of your latest acquaintance, is going to marry Lady Charlotte Ponsonby, Lord Besborough's second daughter, a pretty, sensible and very amiable girl. I seldom tell you that sort of news, but when the parties are very fresh in your memory. Adieu!

## LETTER CLVIII.

Arlington Street, May 24, 1770.

Not only the session is at an end, but I think the Middlesex election too, which my lord Chatham has heated and heated so often over, that there is scarce a spark of fire left. The City, indeed, carried a new remonstrance yesterday, garnished with my lord's own ingredients, but much less hot than the former. The Court, however, was put into some confusion by my Lord Mayor,* who, contrary to all form and precedent, tacked a volunteer speech to the Remonstrance. It was wondrous loyal and respectful, but being an innovation, much discomposed the solemnity. It is always usual to furnish a copy of what is to be said to the King, that he may be prepared with his answer. In this case, he was reduced to tuck up his train, jump from the throne, and take sanctuary in his closet, or answer extempore, which is not part of the royal trade; or sit silent and have nothing to reply. This last was the event, and a position awkward enough in conscience. Wilkes did not appear. When he misses such an opportunity of being impertinent, you may imagine that his spirit of martyrdom is pretty well burnt out. Thus has the winter, which set out with such big black clouds, concluded with a prospect of more serenity than we have seen for some time. Lord Camden, Lord Granby, Lord Huntingdon, and the Duke of Northum-

* Alderman Beckford. He died on the 21st of June of this year.—Ed.

berland, have no great cause to be proud of the finesse of their politics, and Lord Chatham has met with nothing but miscarriages and derision. Disunion has appeared between all parts of the Opposition, and unless experience teaches them to unite more heartily during the summer, or the Court commits any extravagance, or Ireland or America furnishes new troubles, you may compose yourself to tranquillity in your representing ermine, and take as good a nap as any monarch in Europe.

During this probable lethargy, I shall take my leave of you for some time, without writing only to make excuses for having nothing to say, which I have made for so many summers, and which I cannot make even so well as I have done. My pen grows very old, and is not so foolish as to try to conceal it; and if Gil Blas were to tell me that my parts, even small as they were, decay, I should not resent it like his archbishop, nor turn away the honest creature for having perceived what I have found out myself for some time. As my memory, however, is still good, you may depend upon hearing from me again, when I have anything worth telling you. One can always write a gazette, and I am not too proud to descend to any office for your service. Adieu!

## LETTER CLIX.

Arlington Street, June 15, 1770.

I HAVE no public event to tell you, though I write again sooner than I purposed. The journey of the Princess Dowager to Germany is indeed an extraordinary circumstance, but besides its being a week old, as I do not know the motives, I have nothing to say upon it. It is much canvassed and sifted, and yet perhaps she was only in search of a little repose from the torrents of abuse that have been poured upon her for some years. Yesterday they publicly sung about the streets a ballad, the burthen of which was, *the cow has left her calf.* With all this we are grown very quiet, and Lord North's behaviour is so sensible and moderate that he offends nobody.

Our family has lost a branch, but I cannot call it a misfortune. Lord Cholmondeley* died last Saturday. He was seventy, and had a constitution to have carried him to an hundred, if he had not destroyed it by an intemperance, especially in drinking, that would have killed anybody else in half the time. As it was, he had outlived by fifteen years all his set, who have reeled into the ferry-boat so long before him. His grandson seems good and amiable, and though he comes into but a small fortune for an earl, five-and-twenty hundred a-year, his uncle the general may re-establish him upon a great footing—but it will not be in his life, and the general does not sail after his brother on a sea of claret.

* George, third Earl of Cholmondeley, married Mary, daughter of Sir Robert Walpole.

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You have heard details, to be sure, of the horrible catastrophe at the fire-works at Paris.* Francès, the French minister, told me the other night that the number of the killed is so great that they now try to stifle it; my letters say between five and six hundred! I think there were not fewer than ten coach-horses trodden to death. The mob had poured down from the *Etoile* by thousands and ten thousands to see the illuminations, and did not know the havoc they were occasioning. The impulse drove great numbers into the Seine, and those met with the most favourable deaths.

This is a slight summer letter, but you will not be sorry it is so short, when the dearth of events is the cause. Last year I did not know but we might have a battle of Edgehill by this time. At present, my Lord Chatham could as soon raise money as raise the people; and Wilkes will not much longer have more power of doing either. If you were not busy in burning Constantinople, you could not have a better opportunity for taking a trip to England. Have you never a wish this way? Think what satisfaction it would be to me?—but I never advise; nor let my own inclinations judge for my friends. I had rather suffer their absence, than have to reproach myself with having given them bad counsel. I therefore say no more on what would make me so happy. Adieu!

* Those on the marriage of the Dauphin, afterwards the unfortunate Louis XVI. See all the memoirs of the times for the horrible details. —Ed.

## LETTER CLX.

Strawberry Hill, July 26, 1770.

ARE you not glad to have been so long without hearing from me? Your ministerial blood has had time to cool, and settle into the channels of representative dignity. Instead of Wilkes having been so, it looks as if Beckford had been the firebrand of politics, for the flame has gone out entirely since his death,

"And corn grows now where Troy town stood:"

both country gentlemen and farmers are thinking of their harvest, not of petitions and remonstrances.

Yet, don't think I write merely to tell you that I have nothing to tell you. If I have nothing to tell, I have something to ask—something that you would grant without my asking, and yet that you will like to do because I ask it. In short, not to convert my request into a riddle, the Duke of Newcastle's eldest son, Lord Lincoln, is going to your Florence, and his father has desired my recommendation. I have represented how little occasion there could be for my interposition; you knew his father, are obliging to everybody, and attentive to such rank. However, if you can throw in a little extraordinary cordiality for my sake, it will much oblige me. The duke and I have been intimate from our schoolhood, and I should like to have him find that I have been zealous about his son. But if a word is enough to the wise, a syllable is enough to the kindness and friendship

you have ever had for me, and therefore I will only add, that the duke has begged another word for Mr. Chamberlayne, who travels with Lord Lincoln. I hope you will find he deserves it: I do not know him, and therefore I am always in a fright when I frank anybody to you whom I cannot answer for. And, what is worse, you never complain though one send you bears or tigers.

I have quite done with your Russian expedition; it travels as slowly as if it went by the stage-coach. I expected another Bajazet in chains by this time. Instead of that, they are haggling with the Turks about some barbarous villages in the Morea. They stop at everything, though their mistress stops at nothing. I know this is a very brief letter; but you do not wish that I should have a battle of Naseby to send you. Adieu!

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LETTER CLXI.

Arlington Street, Aug. 31, 1770.

I MUST write to you this very minute. I have just seen my Lady Orford and Cavalier Mozzi. I came to town this morning on some business, and after dinner went to Holland House, where I was sitting with Lord and Lady Holland, when the countess and her knight-errant were announced. Lady Holland was distressed, and offered to go down to her: I said, by no means, it was quite a matter of indiffer-

ènce to me; nay, that I had rather see her than not. Up they came: we bowed and curtsied, grew perfectly free immediately, and like two persons that are well bred, easy and not much acquainted. She stayed a full hour; we pronounced each other's name without any difficulty, and when she took leave, for she sets out on Tuesday, she asked if I had any orders for Paris. I find her grown much older, bent, her cheeks fallen in, and half her teeth fallen out; but much improved in her manner and dress. The latter is that of other old women, her face not flustered and heated as it used to be, her impetuosity and eager eyes reduced within proper channels, and none of her screams and exclamations left, though a good deal of kissing remains at her entry and exit. It is not fair to judge at first sight and hearing, but the cavalier seems no genius, and still less adapted to his profession *en titre d'office.* I cannot say that I discovered anything of the countess's asthma or ill health.

If you saw this town, you would not think there could be any news in it. It is as empty as Ferrara. Not that there is anything more new anywhere else. If a dead calm portends a storm at land as well as at sea, we are at the eve of a violent hurricane. We have lived these two months upon the poor Duke of Cumberland, whom the newspapers, in so many letters, call *the Royal Idiot.* I do not know how such language will be taken abroad, but there has been a paper on the King of Spain that has half-choked the Prince of Masserano. Unluckily, it was written with uncommon

humour, and described his Catholic Majesty falling down upon the floor with excessive fatigue from thrashing a horse in the tapestry, which he tried to mount. Another paper on Louis XV. was threatened, but two French officers went to the printer and assured him that they would have the honour of putting him to death if a word appeared against their master,—and the paper has not appeared. The Spanish Ambassador has menaced and complained: the Ministers, who could scarce keep their countenances, the paper was so droll, lamented, "Ma, che fare! Not a tapestry-horse at home escapes: how can we make you reparation, when we cannot help ourselves?" In the mean time, I must confess, we are a parcel of savages, and scalp all the world.

Our newspapers tell us of Russian victories by sea and land, but I will not believe them till they have your confirmation. I hate such rambling wars: the accounts are more like a book of travels, than journals of a campaign. One hears a town is besieged, and three months after, one learns that no army has been within two hundred leagues of it. I know almost as much of the Emperor of the moon as of the Grand Signior.

Adieu! my dear sir, tell me if you would have any bootikins. I had rather you would tell me you have no occasion for them; not that I am one of the great abhorrers of the gout; at least, as I have it rarely. I find it a total dispensation from physicians, and that is something.

## LETTER CLXII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1770.

YESTERDAY I received your confirmation of the great, the vast, the complete victory of the Russians over the Turkish fleet. Indeed, for shortness, I had chosen to credit the first account. As all the part I take in it is the bigness of the event, it would have lost all its poignancy if I had waited to have it authenticated. It is impossible to interest oneself for that woman, who, by murdering her husband, has had an opportunity of spreading so much devastation. Yet, as the French have miscarried in blowing up this conflagration, I am not sorry Catherine is triumphant. It is amusing too, to live at the crisis of a prodigious empire's fate. Consequently, you must take care that Constantinople does not escape. I do not insist on its being sacked, or that, according to a line of Sir Charles Williams, in a parody of bombast rant of Lord Granville, there

"Should visirs' heads come rolling down Constantinople's streets!"

I have no Christian fury to satiate, and wish revolutions could happen with as little bloodshed as in the Rehearsal. Nor do I interest myself for the honour of prophecies. If the Church pretends, for want of knowing what better to do with it, to wrench Daniel's *times, and time, and half a time,* to the present case, it can only be by the job being accomplished *in half the time*

that anybody else expected,—and, let me tell you, it is a good deal for prophecy to come a quarter so near any truth. What will the Czarina do with the Ottoman world? will she hold it *in commendam*, or send her son to reign there, that he may not remain too near her own throne? It may save poisoning him.

And pray what has carried the Pretender to Florence? Does he remain there? Has anybody a mind to be doing with him? He must be adroit indeed if he escapes your vigilance.

I am laid at length upon my couch while I am writing to you, having had the gout above these three weeks in my hand, knee, and both feet, and am still lifted in and out of bed by two servants. This gives me so melancholy a prospect, that I taste very little comfort in that usual compliment, of the gout being an earnest of long life,—alas! is not long life then, an earnest of the gout? and do the joys of old age compensate the pains? What cowards we are, when content to purchase one evil with another! and when both are sure to grow worse upon our hands! Let the happiest old person recount his enjoyments, and see who would covet them; yet each of us is weak enough to expect a better lot! Oh, my dear sir, what self-deluding fools we are through every state!—but why fill you with my gloom? perhaps our best resource is the cheat we practice on ourselves. Adieu!

## LETTER CLXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 4, 1770.

SEEING such accounts of press-gangs in the papers, and such falling of Stocks, you will wonder that in my last I did not drop a military syllable. Alas! when I had a civil war all over my own person, you must not wonder, unpatriotic as it was, that I forgot my country. But I ought not to call ignorance, forgetfulness: I did not even know with whom we were going to war; and now that I know with whom, I do not know that we *are* going to war. England that lives in the north of Europe, and Spain that dwells in the south, are vehemently angry with one another about a morsel of rock* that lies somewhere at the very bottom of America,—for modern nations are too neighbourly to quarrel about anything that lies so near them as in the same quarter of the globe. Pray, mind; we dethrone nabobs in the most north-east corner of the Indies; the Czarina sends a fleet from the Pole to besiege Constantinople; and Spain huffs, and we arm, for one of the extremities of the southern hemisphere. It takes a twelvemonth for any one of us to arrive at our object, and almost another twelvemonth before we can learn what we have been about. Your patriarchs, who lived eight or nine hundred years, could afford to wait eighteen or twenty months for

* The Falkland Island.

the post coming in, but it is too ridiculous in our post-diluvian circumstances. By next century, I suppose, we shall fight for the Dog Star and the Great Bear. The Stocks begin to recover a little from their panic, and their pulse is a very tolerable indication.

Two of your brethren died last Sunday morning; so your spurs, wherein true knighthood lies, should go into double mourning. Lord Grantham* and Sir Richard Lyttelton are the persons; the latter died very suddenly, though each has long been in a deplorable way, the first with excess of scurvy, the latter with the loss of his limbs. Lord Grantham was a miserable object, but Sir Richard all jollity and generosity, and a very cheerful statue.

I am not such a philosopher with my temporary confinement. To-day I began to be led a little about the room. The pain would be endurable, were it to end here; but being the wicket through which one squeezes into old age, and the prospect pointing to more such wickets, I cannot comfort myself with that common delusion of intermediate health. What does the gout cure that is so bad as itself? With this raven-croaking mortality at my window, I am acting as if I did not believe its bodings—I am building again! Nay, but only a bedchamber, the sort of room I seem likely to inhabit much time together. It will be large, and on the first floor,

* Sir Thomas Robinson, Knight of the Bath, and first Lord Grantham of that family.

as I am not at all proud of that American state, being carried on the shoulders of my servants. Indeed, I raise mole-hills with little pleasure now. When reflection has once mixed itself with our pursuits, it renders them very insipid. Charming, thoughtless folly, can alone give any substance to our visions! The moment we perceive that they are visions, it is in vain to shut our eyes and pretend to dream.

Saturday, 6th.

Notwithstanding the testimonies you give, and which I well recollect, of the juvenile huntings of the great Prince of Tuscany,* and the slaughter he used to make of game in tapestry, it is, nevertheless, certain, that the paper published here was a mistake, and ascribed to him what related to his predecessor. It was King Ferdinand that was so watch-mad, and who kept a correspondence by constant couriers with Elliker, the famous watch-maker. It was Ferdinand too, who, on going out of the drawing-room, always made an effort, or at least motion with his leg, that indicated a temptation to mount a horse in tapestry that hung near the door. It may, indeed, be a disorder in the family, and it may run in the blood to have an itch after tapestry animals. I am sure I wish I had a rage for riding and shooting my furniture, by a genealogic disorder, instead of the gout, which, though we can scarce discover any gouty stains in my pedi-

* Don Carlos, afterwards King of Naples, and then of Spain.

gree, I must conclude derived thence, as my temperance and sobriety would have set up an ancient philosopher. I begin to creep about my room, and can tell you, for your comfort, that by the cool, uncertain manner in which you speak of your fits, I am sure you never have had the gout. I have known several persons talk of it, that might as well have fancied they had the gout when they sneezed. You shall have, however, a pair of bootikins to hang up in your armory.

I still know nothing of the war. Vast preparations everywhere go on, yet nobody thinks it will ripen. We used to make war without preparing; I hope the reverse will be true now. Where is the gentleman* who came lately from Rome? Has there been any thought of lending him a tapestry-horse? There is a terrible set of hangings in the House of Lords† that would frighten them—I was going to say, *out* of, but I should say, *into* their senses. It is the representation of the destruction of the Spanish Armada. It is enough to cure the whole royal family of Spain of their passion for encountering tapestry.

We have a new ship, which, I hear, terrifies all the foreign ministers; it is named the Britannia, and though carrying an hundred and twenty guns, sails as pertly as a frigate. Seamen flock in apace; the first squadron will consist of sixteen ships of the line. Your *Corps Diplomatique* says, our seamen are so impetuous, and so eager for prize-money, that it will be

* The Pretender. † A tapestry in the House of Lords.

impossible to avoid a war: I am sure it would be impossible if they were the contrary.

Who do you think is arrived? The famous Princess Daschkaw, the Czarina's favourite and accomplice, now in disgrace—and yet alive! Nay, both she and the Empress are alive! She has put her son to Westminster-school. The devil is in it, if the son of a conspiratress with an English education, does not turn out a notable politician. I am impatient to get well, or at least hope she may stay till I am, that I may see her. Cooled as my curiosity is about most things, I own I am eager to see this amazon, who had so great a share in a revolution, when she was not above nineteen. I have a print of the Czarina, with Russian verses under it, written by this virago. I do not understand them, but I conclude their value depends more on the authoress than the poetry. One is pretty sure what they do not contain—truth. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXIV.

Arlington Street, Nov. 12, 1770.

I BEGIN my letter to-night, on the eve of many events, which will probably fill my paper, but at present I am only making my letter ready. The Parliament is to meet to-morrow, though the definitive courier from Spain is not expected these three days; so the King's speech must blow both hot and cold. However, the ministers need fear no parliamentary

war of any consequence. The deaths of Beckford and Lord Granby, and that of Mr. Grenville,* which is expected every day, leave Lord Chatham without troops or generals, and unless like Almanzor,† he thinks he can conquer alone, he must lean on Lord Rockingham; and God knows! that is a slender reed. Wilkes and his party are grown ridiculous; so that upon the whole, Opposition is little formidable. I believe and hope the complexion of the answer from Spain will be pacific. We have by this time, or shall by to-morrow, have a Lord Chancellor. It is De Grey, the Attorney-General; a very proper one, as often as the gout will let him be so. I am not afflicted with it like him, and mine, thanks to water and the bootikins, is entirely gone; yet I would not take the Great Seal. Mr. Conway has succeeded Lord Granby as Colonel of the Blues, the most agreeable post in the army. Lady Aylesbury's father,‡ the Duke of Argyle, is just dead; so the charming Duchess of Hamilton is now Duchess of Argyle. As she is not quite so charming as she was, I don't know whether it is not better than to retain a title that put one in mind of her beauty. Lord Egmont § is given over too, so the next volume of our history will have few of the old actors in it. Thus much for preface. To-morrow, or Friday, I may tell you more.

* George Grenville, younger brother of Richard Earl Temple, had been first Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

† In Dryden's Conquest of Granada.

‡ General John Campbell succeeded his cousin Archibald, Duke of Argyll, in the title. § John Perceval, second Earl of Egmont.

To-morrow, 13th.

Mr. Grenville died at seven this morning; consequently Lord Chatham and Lord Temple cannot be at the House of Lords. The King's speech is very firm, and war must ensue if Spain is not very yielding. As we shall probably know in two or three days, I shall keep back my letter till Friday.

Thursday, 15th.

No courier, no Chancellor yet. De Grey was only to be Lord Keeper, and now hesitates—for men in these times are the reverse of commodities at an auction: when there is but one man to be sold, and but one bidder for him, that bidder is forced to enhance upon himself. Half the revenue goes in salaries, and the other half will go in pensions to persuade people to accept those salaries. However, Lord Mansfield, who had already been frightened out of the Speaker's chair, will not be encouraged by a Junius that came out yesterday, the most outrageous, I suppose, ever published against so high a magistrate by name. The excess of abuse, the personality, and new attacks on the Scotch, make people ascribe it to Wilkes—to me the composition is far above him.

The Parliament opened with nothing more than conversation in both Houses: Lord Chatham, Lord Temple, and all the friends of Mr. Grenville, absenting themselves, as he was dead that morning. The complexion, however, seemed to be military. Lord North spoke well, and with great prudence; Colonel Barré, with wit and severity; Burke warmly, and not well. I

write this to-day because I am obliged to go to Strawberry to-morrow on some business of my own; but if I learn anything particular to-night, I will add it before I set out in the morning.

Friday morning.

No, nothing new, but that Baron Smyth, one of the Commissioners of the Great Seal, is to be Lord Keeper I know nothing of him, but that he is a methodist, and a grandson of Waller's Sacharissa, by a second husband.

Well! I have seen the Princess Daschkaw, and she is well worth seeing—not for her person, though, for an absolute Tartar, she is not ugly: her smile is pleasing, but her eyes have a very Catiline fierceness. Her behaviour is extraordinarily frank and easy. She talks on all subjects, and not ill, nor with striking pedantry, and is quick and very animated. She puts herself above all attention to dress, and everything feminine, and yet sings tenderly and agreeably, with a pretty voice. She, and a Russian lady who accompanies her, sung two songs of the people, who are all musical; one was grave, the other lively, but with very tender turns, and both resembling extremely the Venetian barquerolles. She speaks English a little, understands it easily: French is very familiar to her, and she knows Latin. When the news of the naval victory over the Turks arrived at Petersburgh, the Czarina made the archbishop mount the tomb of Peter the Great, and ascribe the victory to him as the founder of the Marine. It was a bold *coup de théatre*, and Pagan enough. The discourse, which is said to be very ele-

gant, the princess has translated into French, and Dr. Hinchcliffe, Bishop of Peterborough, is to publish it in English. But, as an instance of her quickness and parts, I must tell you that she went to a Quaker's meeting. As she came away, one of the women came up to her, and told her she saw she was a foreigner, that she wished her all prosperity, and should be very glad if anything she had seen amongst them that day should contribute to her salvation. The Princess thanked her very civilly, and said, "Madame, je ne sçais si la voye de silence n'est point la meilleure façon d'adorer l'Etre Supreme." In short, she is a very singular personage, and I am extremely pleased that I have seen her. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXV.

Arlington Street, Nov. 26, 1770.

I THIS minute receive your letter of October 27th, and do not wonder you are impatient to hear what the Spanish courier says. He arrived this day sevennight; and, had his message been definite, or published, you should have heard immediately; but, whatever he brought, it was left to the Spanish Ambassador to traffic with, and make the best market he could of it. At first, the Stocks, who are our most knowing politicians, opined that the answer was pacific, and they held their heads very high. On Saturday last, their hearts sunk into their breeches; all officers were ordered to their

posts. I am just come from the King's levee, where Lord Howe kissed hands for being appointed Commander in the Mediterranean. He is no trifler. The army is to be augmented. Still I will hope we shall remain in peace, for, whether we beat or are beaten, we always contrive to make a shameful treaty. At home, the Ministers are victorious. Motions were made in both Houses last Thursday for the papers relating to Falkland's Island, which were refused in the Lords by 61 to 25; in the Commons, by 225 to 101. Lord Chatham, who is Almanzor himself, and kicks and cuffs friend and enemy, abused the Ministers, Opposition, Wilkes, and the City. Lord Temple did not appear, nor any of Grenville's friends. Wilkes has his own civil wars in his own party, and by the consequence of fractions in small numbers, both he and his rival-mates are become ridiculous. This is the present state at home. We have neither Chancellor nor Keeper yet: Bathurst is now talked of.

I am much obliged to you for the detail of Le Fevre's medicine; but I am perfectly recovered without it, and strong in opinion against it. I am persuaded that he is a quack, and his nostrum dangerous. By quack I mean impostor, not in opposition to, but in common with physicians. He has been here and carried off five thousand pounds, at a hundred pounds per patient.* You must know, I do not believe the gout to be curable. In the next place, I am sure he cannot give any proof of its being a humour, and if it is,

* His medicine proved extremely noxious.

it is not a single fund of humours, but probably a mass thrown off at periods by the constitution. It is doubtful whether wind is not the essence of gout; it certainly has much to do with it. There must have been longer experience of this new remedy's effects before I would try it upon myself. I have known many nostrums stop every cranny into which the gout is used to crowd itself, and the consequence has always been an explosion. I am not desperate, nor like the adage, *kill or cure.* But my great objection of all is, that the medicine begins with *giving* the gout. Thank it; I have not the disorder above once in two years, and it would be bad economy to bring on what I may never live to have. In short, the bootikins, water, and lemonade, have restored me so completely, that I have not the smallest symptom left of lameness or weakness; and Mr. Chute, who has a much deeper mine of gout in his frame than I have, finds his fits exceedingly diminished by the constant use of the bootikins, and walks better than he did ten years ago.

Tuesday.

I must send away my letter without being able to tell you whether it is war or peace. You shall hear again as soon as either is determined. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXVI.

Arlington Street, Dec. 18th, 1770.

THE peace is an errant Will-o'-wisp, a Jack-o'-lanthorn, that dances before one's eyes, and one cannot

set one's foot upon it. A new vapour has started up before it, which, as I am no natural philosopher, I cannot tell whether it will bring us nearer to the meteor, or prevent our reaching it. The day before yesterday Lord Weymouth resigned the Seals. If you ask why? so does everybody; and I do not hear that anybody has received an answer. Lord Sandwich succeeds him, but takes the Northern Province, not yours, as you would wish. However, Lord Rochford does, and I flatter myself you are very well with him too.

Recent as this event is, it is almost forgotten in a duel that happened yesterday between Lord George Germaine and a Governor Johnstone, the latter of whom abused the former grossly last Friday in the House of Commons. Lord George behaved with the utmost coolness and intrepidity. Each fired two pistols, and Lord George's first was shattered in his hand by Johnstone's fire, but neither were hurt. However, whatever Lord George Sackville* was, Lord George Germaine is a hero!

If we have nothing else to do after the holidays we are to amuse ourselves with worrying Lord Mansfield, who, between irregularities in his Court, timidity, and want of judgment, has lowered himself to be the object of hatred to many, and of contempt to everybody. I do not think that he could re-establish himself, if he were to fight Governor Johnstone.

* Lord George Sackville took the name of Germaine on inheriting the estate of Lady Elizabeth Germaine. The seconds were, for Lord George Germaine, Right Hon. Thomas Townshend; for Governor Johnstone, Sir James Lowther, Bart.—Ed.

Last week there was a great uproar in the House of Lords, followed by a secession of Lord Chatham and a dozen of the Opposition. They returned next day very quietly. Part of the House of Commons, whose members the majority had turned out, attempted to convert this riot into a quarrel between the Houses, but could make nothing of it. M. de Guines, the new French Ambassador, stares and wonders what all these things mean: some fresh hurly-burly arrives before he has got half way into a comprehension of the preceding. He is extremely civil and attentive to please—I do not know whether he will have time to succeed.

This is but a mezzanine letter; something, if you will allow me to pun, between two *stories*. I don't know what is to be built up or pulled down, for I am no architect, but only sketch out what I see. Our fabrics, indeed, of late years, seem to be erected with cards, easily raised and as easily demolished. As we have used all our packs round and round, we can but have some of the old ones again. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Saturday evening, Dec. 29th, 1770.

We are alarmed, or very glad, we don't know which. The Duke de Choiseul is fallen! but we cannot tell yet whether the mood of his successors will be peaceable or martial. The news arrived yesterday morning, and the event happened but last Monday

evening. He was allowed but three hours to prepare for his journey, and ordered to retire to his seat at Chanteloup; but there are letters that say, *qu'il ira plus loin.* The Duke de Praslin is banished too—a disagreeable man; but his fate is a little hard, for he was just going to resign the Marine to Chatelet, who, by the way, is forbidden to visit Choiseul. I shall shed no tears for Chatelet, the most peevish and insolent of men, our bitter enemy, and whom M. de Choiseul may thank in some measure for his fall; for I believe while Chatelet was here, he drew the Spaniards into the attack of Falkland's Island. Choiseul's own conduct seems to have been not a little equivocal. His friends maintained that his existence as a minister depended on his preventing a war, and he certainly confuted the Comptroller-General's plan of raising supplies for it. Yet, it is now said, that on the very morning of the Duke's disgrace, the King reproached him, and said, "Monsieur, je vous avois dit, que je ne voulois pas la guerre;" and the Duke d'Aiguillon's friends have officiously whispered, that if Choiseul was out it would certainly be peace; but did not Lord Chatham, immediately before he was Minister, protest not half a man should be sent to Germany, and yet, were not all our men and all our money sent thither? The Chevalier de Muy is made Secretary-at-War, and it is supposed Monsieur d'Aiguillon is, or will be, the Minister.

Thus Abishag* has strangled an Administration that had lasted fourteen years. I am sincerely grieved for

* Madame du Barri.

the Duchess de Choiseul, the most perfect being I know of either sex. I cannot possibly feel for her husband: Corsica is engraved in my memory, as I believe it is on your heart. His cruelties there, I should think, would not cheer his solitude or prison. In the mean time, desolation and confusion reign all over France. They are almost bankrupts, and quite famished. The Parliament of Paris has quitted its functions, and the other tribunals threaten to follow the example. Some people say, that Maupeou, the Chancellor, told the King, that they were supported underhand by Choiseul, and must submit if he were removed. The suggestion is specious at least, as the object of their antipathy is the Duke d'Aiguillon. If the latter should think a war a good diversion to their enterprises, I should not be surprised if they went on, especially if a bankruptcy follows famine. The new Minister and the Chancellor are in general execration. On the latter's lately obtaining the *Cordon Bleu*, this epigram appeared :—

> Ce tyran de la France, qui cherche à mettre tout en feu,
> Mérite un cordon, mais ce n'est pas le cordon bleu.

We shall see how Spain likes the fall of the author of the "Family-compact." There is an Empress will not be pleased with it, but it is not the Russian Empress; and much less the Turks, who are as little obliged to that bold man's intrigues as the poor Corsicans. How can one regret such a general *Boute-feu?*

Perhaps our situation is not very stable neither. The world, who are ignorant of Lord Weymouth's motives, suspect a secret intelligence with Lord Chatham. Oh! let us have peace abroad before we quarrel any more at home!

Judge Bathurst is to be Lord Keeper, with many other arrangements in the law; but as you neither know the persons, nor I care about them, I shall not fill my paper with the catalogue, but reserve the rest of my letter for Tuesday, when I shall be in town. No Englishman, you know, will sacrifice his Saturday and Sunday. I have so little to do with all these matters, that I came hither this morning, and left this new chaos to arrange itself as it pleases. It certainly is an era, and may be an extensive one: not very honourable to old King Capet,* whatever it may be to the intrigues of his new Ministers. The Jesuits will not be without hopes. They have a friend that made mischief *ante Helenam.*

Jan. 1, 1771.

I hope the new year will end as quietly as it begins, for I have not a syllable to tell you. No letters are come from France since Friday morning, and this is Tuesday noon. As we had full time to reason—in the dark, the general persuasion is, that the French Revolution will produce peace—I mean in Europe—not amongst themselves. Probably I have been sending you little but what you will have heard long before

* Louis XV.

you receive my letter; but no matter; if we did not chat about our neighbour Kings, I don't know how we should keep up our correspondence, for we are better acquainted with King Louis, King Carlos, and Empresses Katharine and Teresa, than you with the English that I live amongst, or I with your Florentines. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXVIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 15, 1771.

THERE seems to be a pestilence amongst our politicians. They go off by wholesale. The Duke of Bedford died last night; happily for himself, poor man! for he had lost his sight, and almost his speech and limbs. Sir Edward Hawke is only dead politically, having resigned from age and infirmities. The new Secretary of State, Lord Sandwich, succeeds him, and no man in England is fitter for the office. I do not know who will have the Seals. Lord Suffolk is most talked of, but though young, he is all over gout. The Great Seal remains at nurse, and the changes in the law are still in suspense, like the peace, which somehow or other has been strangely bungled. We might, I am persuaded, have had it two months ago. The Opposition is in the last state of a consumption; Mr. Grenville's friends point due west to St. James's; Lord Chatham and Lord Temple have quarrelled, and the latter is retired. Lord Shelburne has lost his

wife, our friend Lady Granville's daughter,* acts the disconsolate husband, and is going abroad; Wilkes and Parson Horne write against each other; Alderman Sawbridge is dying; and, in short, Lord Chatham, like Widdrington in Chevy Chace, is left almost alone to fight it out upon his stumps. So we must have a new world, start new subjects, or sink into a dead calm; for I think still that we shall not go to war.

In France the scene seems thoroughly foolish. The Duke of Choiseul has lost his power ridiculously by braving a *fille de joie*, to humour two women† who seem to think "qu'on ne doit pas être impunement Putain, sans être grande dame." He comforts himself, as every body does in France that is in fashion, with being applauded, and with reading a million of epigrams against his enemies: not considering that he will be as much forgotten in a month as if he was the pattern of last year's coat. The cabal that drove him out are said to be divided; at least they had no arrangement ready. They have been dragging old Lieutenant-Generals out of garrisons to fill up state places, and cannot get enough even thence, or from hospitals; but are trying to furbish up ancient Ministers and Ambassadors to set forwards for ostensible Minister. They have talked

* The first wife of William Fitzmaurice, second Earl of Shelburne was daughter of John Carteret, Earl of Granville, by his second wife, Lady Sophia Fermor, daughter of Thomas Earl of Pomfret.

† The Duchesse de Grammont, sister of the Duc de Choiseul, and her friend the Princesse de Beauveau.

of Monsieur d'Ossun from Madrid, a Monsieur de Vergennes who was at Constantinople, and even of the silly Cardinal de Bernis. The Chancellor, who is abhorred, seems to have most credit. The Duc d'Aiguillon, they say, is a little disappointed, but will have the *affaires étrangères* as soon as the peace is made; but at present the Prince of Condé has much power with the King. In the mean time the thunders of Versailles have blunted themselves, and a composition is on foot with the Parliament, who are permitted not to register the last tempest. I do not think these new giants will grow more tractable when Pelion and Ossa are lifted off their necks.

So much for England and France. Yes, yes, it is a new world. The ancient *dramatis personæ* are dead, or have quitted the stage. I shall continue for your sake to send you great outlines, but I cannot interest myself about a new race, when I have done with the theatre myself. What can occupy one less than a play-bill, when one scarce knows half the actors by sight? Not that I have that symptom of age, esteeming only the veterans one remembers. God knows, how few I admired of the old troop! neither Betterton nor Penkethman, Lord Hardwicke nor the Duke of Newcastle. I can easily expect their successors to play their parts better.

Princess Amelia, who is not of this age neither, was very near dying two days ago of a bilious fever.

Well, as we have closed a long period, pray send me my letters to the end of last year. I believe I

have mentioned it once or twice. I should like to have them all together, for they are a kind of history—only think of eight and twenty years!

I will tell you what I must get you to send me, too, by the first opportunity, the "Lettere Pittoriche;" I am not quite sure of the title, but they are three, four, or five small volumes, in quarto, of the letters of the great painters. I saw the two first volumes some time ago at Paris, but could not get them; and as I have now finished the last volume of my "Anecdotes of Painting," and intend, after it is published, to make a new general edition, I know there are passages in those letters that I should like to insert in my work. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXIX.

Arlington Street, Jan. 20th, 1771.

You will wonder to hear from me again so very soon. Yet I am not going to proclaim war, or announce peace; though I believe we shall, thank God, have the latter. We have not a new Secretary of State, nor any new death; but, in short, I am impatient to thank you for a present that I have received, and that you never mentioned having sent me. Sure it is not so insignificant! It is the volume of "Masaccio's Designs," brought by Mr. Coxe. I am transported with them! They are Nature itself, and evidently the precursors of Raphael. He plainly availed himself of their dignity, but scarce reached the infinite truth of

their expression. The action of the mouth in every head almost surpasses any other master, and seems to have been caught only by this. I did not remember these works. Oh! if there are more, make your Patch* give us all. I cannot be content under all. They are admirably touched and executed: he must engrave the rest; and there is one more work he must perform, too. I remember at Florence a very few pictures of Fra. Bartolomeo, another parent of Raphael, and whose ideas I thought, if possible, greater: as there is such a scarcity of his works, and as they have never that I know been engraved, at least not so well I am persuaded as these by Patch, make him add them to another set of Masaccio's heads. It will immortalize you both to preserve such works. I am much pleased, too, with the "Caricaturas," that is, with those that are scarce caricaturas; for, you must know, I love truth; and those that are not extravagant, are highly natural. Tell me more of this Patch; and, if you have a mind to please me quite, send me a drawing by him of yourself, of your whole person, exactly as you are. Astley's head of you, though finely coloured, never satisfied me for likeness. Let me have your figure precisely, and as natural as the *Crelia in Funzione.* I am expecting Sir Joshua Reynolds, our best painter, whom I have sent for, to see some wonderful miniatures I have bought, and these heads of Masaccio. I think they may give him

* An English artist and picture-dealer and cleaner, afterwards much known and employed.

such lights as may raise him prodigiously. I must repeat it, the mouths, and often the eyes, are life itself. There is but one head I do not like; it is No. 22; and yet I believe it a portrait, but ill chosen. My dear sir, do push on this work: let us have more of Masaccio, and all the few of Bartolomeo. The great Duke will not refuse you a permission for Patch to copy them.

22nd.

Obligations beget importunities. I must beg you to send me two more of Patch's volumes of Masaccio; but, as they are for other people, I must pay for them; so don't haggle, but tell me their price, and I will give your brother the money.

The Parliament is in the act of meeting; but, I should think, except a Mansfield-baiting, there will be little stirring till the peace is made, and can be found fault with. Made, I hope, and think, it will be. For the vacancies, they are still at market. It is odd that just at the same moment, in France the Chancellor cannot make a Minister, and in England the Minister cannot make a Chancellor.

As this is a letter of supererogation, I make no excuses for its brevity. Adieu.

Tuesday, 22nd, in the evening.

I had sealed my letter, as you will perceive; and break it open again in a great hurry, to tell you the peace was signed last night, and declared in the House of Commons to-day. You will ask the conditions: I don't know them yet, nor much trouble my head about them, but I could not help sending you this good news.

My codicil must contradict half my letter. Lord Halifax is Secretary of State, and Lord Suffolk Privy Seal. Mr. Bathurst, Lord Keeper, *en attendant* his father's death to be Chancellor; De Grey, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; Thurlow and Wedderburne Attorney and Solicitor-Generals. There, I think I shall have no occasion to write again soon. Good night!

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## LETTER CLXX.

Arlington Street, Feb. 22, 1771.

Two days ago there began to be an alarm at the delay of the Spanish courier, and people were persuaded that the King of Spain had refused to ratify his ambassador's declaration; who, on the warrant of the French King, had ventured to sign it, though expecting every hour to be recalled, as he actually was two days afterwards. However, the night before last, to the great comfort of Prince Masserano and our Ministers, the ratification arrived; and, after so many delays and untoward accidents, Fortune has interposed, (for there has been great luck, too, in the affair,) and peace is again established. With you, I am not at all clear that Choiseul was in earnest to make it. If he was, it was entirely owing to his own ticklish situation. Other people think, that this very situation had made him desperate; and that he was on the point of striking a hardy stroke indeed; and meditated sending a strong army into Holland, to oblige the Dutch to lend

twelve men-of-war to invade us. Count Welderen,* who is totally an anti-Gaul, assured me he did not believe this project. Still I am very glad such a *boute-feu* is removed.

This treaty is an epoch; and puts a total end to all our preceding histories. Long quiet is never probable, nor shall I guess who will disturb it; but, whatever happens, must be thoroughly new matter, though some of the actors perhaps may not be so. Both Lord Chatham and Wilkes are at the end of their reckoning, and the Opposition can do nothing without fresh fuel.

The scene that is closed here seems to be but opening in France. The Parliament of Paris banished; a new one arbitrarily appointed; the Princes of the Blood refractory and disobedient; the other Parliament as mutinous; and distress everywhere: if the army catches the infection, what may not happen, when the King is despised, his agents detested, and no Ministry settled? Some say the mistress and her faction keep him hourly diverted or drunk; others, that he has got a new passion: how creditable at sixty! Still I think it is the crisis of their constitution. If the Monarch prevails, he becomes absolute as a Czar; if he is forced to bend, will the Parliament stop there?

In the mean time our most serious war is between two operas. Mr. Hobart, Lord Buckingham's brother, is manager of the Haymarket. Last year he affronted Guadagni, by preferring the Zamperina,* his own mis-

* The Dutch Minister in England. He married a sister of Sir John Griffin, Maid of Honour to Anne Princess of Orange.

† See Correspondence of George Selwyn, vol. ii. *passim.*

tress, to the singing hero's sister. The Duchess of Northumberland, Lady Harrington, and some other great ladies, espoused the brother, and without a licence erected an opera for him at Madame Cornelys's. This is a singular dame, and you must be acquainted with her. She sung here formerly, by the name of the Pompeiati. Of late years she has been the Heidegger of the age, and presided over our diversions. Her taste and invention in pleasures and decorations are singular. She took Carlisle House in Soho-square, enlarged it, and established assemblies and balls by subscription. At first they scandalized, but soon drew in both righteous and ungodly. She went on building, and made her house a fairy palace, for balls, concerts, and masquerades. Her opera, which she called *Harmonic Meetings*, was splendid and charming. Mr. Hobart began to starve, and the managers of the theatres were alarmed. To avoid the act, she pretended to take no money, and had the assurance to advertise that the subscription was to provide coals for the poor, for she has vehemently courted the mob, and succeeded in gaining their princely favour. She then declared her masquerades were for the benefit of commerce. I concluded she would open another sort of house next for the interests of the Foundling Hospital, and I was not quite mistaken, for they say one of her maids, gained by Mr. Hobart, affirms that she could not undergo the fatigue of managing such a house. At last Mr. Hobart informed against her, and the bench of justices, less soothable by music than Orpheus's beasts, have pronounced against her. Her opera

is quashed, and Guadagni, who governed so haughtily at Vienna, that, to pique some man of quality there, he named a minister to Venice, is not only fined, but was threatened to be sent to Bridewell, which chilled the blood of all the Cæsars and Alexanders he had ever represented; nor could any promises of his lady-patronesses rehabilitate his courage—so for once an act of Parliament goes for something.

You have got three new companions;* General Montagu, a West-Indian Mr. Paine, and Mr. Lynch, your brother at Turin.

There is the devil to pay in Denmark. The Queen has got the ascendant, has turned out favourites and Ministers, and literally wears the breeches, actual buckskin. There is a physician,† who is said to rule both their Majesties, and I suppose is sold to France, for that is the predominant interest now at Copenhagen. The Czarina has whispered her disapprobation, and if she has a talon left, when she has done with the Ottomans, may chance to scratch the little King.

For eight months to come I should think we shall have little to talk of, you and I, but distant wars and distant majesties. For my part, I reckon the volume quite shut in which I took any interest. The succeeding world is young, new, and half unknown to me. Tranquillity comprehends every wish I have left, and I think I should not even ask what news there is, but for fear of seeming wedded to old stories—the

* As Knights of the Bath. † Struenzee, afterwards beheaded.

rock of old men; and yet I should prefer that failing to the solicitude about a world one belongs to no more! Adieu!

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LETTER CLXXI.

Arlington Street, March 22, 1771.

I WAS in too great a hurry when I announced peaceable times, and half took leave of you as a correspondent. The horizon is overcast again already; the wind is got to the north-east and by Wilkes; and without a figure, the House of Commons and the city of London are at open war. It is more surprising that Wilkes is not the aggressor—at least Folly put new crackers into his hand. Two cousins, both George Onslow by name, the son and nephew of the old Speaker, took offence at seeing the debates and speeches of the House printed, and the more, as they had both been much abused. They complain, and the House issues warrants for seizing the printers, and addresses the King to issue a proclamation for apprehending them. Out comes a proclamation, and no great seal to it. The City declares no man shall be apprehended contrary to law, within their jurisdiction. The printers are seized; Wilkes, as sitting alderman, releases one: the Lord Mayor, Wilkes, and another alderman deliver another, and commit the messenger of the House of Commons to prison. The House summons the Lord Mayor to appear before them and answer for his conduct, but as he is laid up with

the gout, allow him to come on Monday last, or to-day, Friday. He gets out of bed and goes on Monday. Thousands of hand-bills are dispersed to invite the mob to escort him, but not an hundred attend. He pleads his oath of office, is too ill to stay, demands that the City should be heard by council, and is allowed to retire. Wilkes is summoned too: writes a refusal to the Speaker, unless he is admitted to his seat. The Speaker will not receive his letter, nor the House hear it, though read, and again order him to attend. On Wednesday they allow counsel, but not against their own privileges, and expect the Lord Mayor again to-day, but the papers of this morning say he is not yet able to appear.

This is the *argomento,* as your opera-books call the sketch of the subject, but I do not tell you the *dénouement* any more than Metastasio does—I wish it may not be necessary to call it the catastrophe, for methinks here are plenty of combustibles: but as this is only the first act, and I have not time to finish my letter to-day, I may be able to unfold a little more of the drama by Tuesday's post; but I have long left off guessing, for in all public events I have observed, that the turn things take depends upon persons and accidents that start up in the midst of the story, and have nothing to do with the reasoning on which one builds conjectures; so for the present I leave this chapter in the dark, which is conformable to the suspense that artful tragic writers use to increase the interest and curiosity of their readers. I believe you will think I have been employing the

same mechanism before, having announced to you three months ago the progress of the prosecution of Lord Mansfield; but it seems that Lord Camden, Lord Chatham, and the public, who seldom relinquish a promised bear-baiting, have equally forgotten the pomp with which that spectacle was announced. I have not heard it mentioned since Christmas—and now we are not likely to want trials and sufferers!—nay, martyrs!

I doubt—yes, I doubt, whether King Carlos does not intend to find us still more serious employment, if this should not prove so. There has been an ugly question asked, I don't know by whom, or to whom, "But, pray when does England intend to restore Falkland's Island?"—"Restore it! Why, Lord bless us! you have not given it back to England yet: how can she restore it to you?" The Stocks have got wind of this secret, and their heart is fallen into their breeches, where the heart of the Stocks is apt to lie. Then there is a famine and pestilence arrived from Bengal. Some say three millions of people are swept away, and others three thousand; and a ship lost with Vansittart, Scrafton, and the supervisors who were going to set all to rights; for it seems we are playing the devil, and plundering and tyrannizing—as if we had not gone thither for those two Christian purposes.

Saturday, 23rd.

My Lord Mayor is still confined, and sent a card yesterday to the Speaker to excuse waiting on him. The House in the mean time intend to divert themselves with Alderman Oliver on Monday, for their dignity grows very much inflamed for its own honour. So

does the City's too, and Temple-bar will have enough to do to keep the peace between them.

France, luckily, has little leisure to join with King Carlos or King Brass Crosby—their confusions and King Louis's weakness seem to increase every day. You shall hear the history of the Comte de Maillebois. He accused Marshal D'Etrées in the last war for losing the battle of Hastenbecke, which, by the way, we never found. D'Etrées recriminated, and called Maillebois before the Marshals of France, by whom he was *flétri*, imprisoned for a year, and deprived of all his employments but one *lieutenance héréditaire*.

Of late Maillebois had revived, and caballed against Choiseul, on whose fall he grew big; and, by the interest of the Prince of Condé and M. de Montegnard, was appointed one of a new commission of three *Directeurs des Places Fortifiées*, with forty thousand livres a-year each. The Comte de Broglie, who adheres to the D'Aiguillon's faction, spirits up his brother, and the Marshals of France present a strong memorial against so improper a nomination. Montegnard prevails, and obtains from the King a reprimand to the Marshals, and calls it *téméraire* to dispute his royal choice. This was signed at ten in the morning. Triumphant Maillebois posts with it to Paris. At past twelve that very night he receives a dismission, and Montegnard a command to wait on each separate Marshal of France the next morning, and beg their pardons for having made so unworthy a recommendation. There! there are two men tolerably disgraced!

And what do you think of such weathercock Majesty that signs two such contradictions in one day? As the latter was Madame du Barri's act, it is plain what is the shape of the helm of Government. Monsieur de Montegnard and the Abbé du Terray, are said to have resigned, and to be again in place, but I am not sure of the truth of this last paragraph.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night.

I came hither to-day in a tempest of snow; it is the fourth winter we have had since Christmas. I was not quite so much at ease when I went to town last Monday, having received a courier from Mr. Conway to tell me that my house in Arlington Street had been broken open in the night, and all my cabinets and trunks forced and plundered. I was a good quarter of an hour before I recollected that it was very becoming to have philosophy enough not to care about what one does care, for if you don't care there is no philosophy in bearing it. I despatched my upper servant, breakfasted with Mr. Chute, who was come down with me, fed the bantams as usual, and made no more hurry to town than Cincinnatus would have done, if he had lost a basket of turnips. I had left in my drawers 270*l.* in bank-bills, and three hundred guineas; not to mention all my gold and silver coins, some inestimable miniatures, a little plate, and a good deal of furniture, under no guard but that of two maidens, whom lions you know will not touch, but who are very ravishable by house-breakers, a much more hungry kind of wild beast. When I arrived, my surprise was by no means

diminished. I found in three different chambers, three cabinets, a large chest, and a glass-case of china wide open, the locks not picked, but forced, and the doors of them broken to pieces. You will wonder that this should surprise me when I had been prepared for it.—Oh! the miracle was, that I did not find, nor to this hour have found, the least thing missing. In the cabinet of modern medals there were, and so there are still, a series of English coins, with downright John-Trot guineas, half-guineas, shillings, sixpences, and every kind of current money. Not a single piece was removed. Just so in the Roman and Greek cabinet; though in the latter were some drawers of papers, which they had tumbled and scattered about the floor. A great Exchequer chest, that belonged to my father, was in the same room. Not being able to force the lock, the philosophers (for thieves that steal nothing deserve the title much more than Cincinnatus or I) had wrenched a great flapper of brass with such violence as to break it into seven pieces. The trunk contained a new set of chairs of French tapestry, two screens, rolls of prints, and a suit of silver stuff that I had made for the King's wedding. All was turned topsy-turvy, and nothing stolen. The glass-case and cabinet of shells had been handled as roughly by these impotent gallants. Another little table with drawers, in which by the way the key was left, had been opened too, and a metal standish, that they ought to have taken for silver, and a silver hand-candlestick that stood upon it, were untouched. Some plate in the

pantry, and all my linen just come from the wash, had no more charms for them than gold or silver. In short, I could not help laughing, especially as the only two moveables neglected, were another little table with drawers and the money, and a writing-box with the bank-notes, both in the same chamber where they made the first havoc. In short, they had broken out a panel in the door of the area, and unbarred and unbolted it and gone out at the street door, which they left wide open at five o'clock in the morning. A passenger had found it so, and alarmed the maids, one of whom ran naked into the street, and by her cries waked my Lord Romney, who lives opposite. The poor creature was in fits for two days, but at first, finding my coach-maker's apprentice in the street, had sent him to Mr. Conway, who immediately despatched him to me before he knew how little damage I had received, the whole of which consists in repairing the doors and locks of my cabinets and coffer.

All London is reasoning on this marvellous adventure, and not an argument presents itself that some other does not contradict. I insist that I have a talisman. You must know that last winter, being asked by Lord Vere to assist in settling Lady Betty Germaine's auction, I found in an old catalogue of her collection this article, "*The Black Stone into which Dr. Dee used to call his spirits.*" Dr. Dee, you must know, was a great conjuror in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and has written a folio of the dialogues he held with his imps. I asked eagerly for this stone; Lord Vere said he

knew of no such thing, but if found, it should certainly be at my service. Alas, the stone was gone! This winter I was again employed by Lord Frederic Campbell, for I am an absolute auctioneer, to do him the same service about his father's* collection. Among other odd things, he produced a round piece of shining black marble in a leathern case, as big as the crown of a hat, and asked me what that could possibly be? I screamed out, "Oh Lord, I am the only man in England that can tell you! it is Dr. Dee's black stone!" it certainly is; Lady Betty had formerly given away or sold, time out of mind, for she was a thousand years old, that part of the Peterborough collection which contained Natural Philosophy. So, or since, the black stone had wandered into an auction, for the lotted paper is still on it. The Duke of Argyle, who bought everything, bought it: Lord Frederic gave it to me;† and if it was not this magical stone, which is only of high polished coal, that preserved my chattels, in truth I cannot guess what did.

We have got the Roman Prince and Princess Giustiniani: she is daughter of some Derwentwater, and has many relations here among the spurious royal family. He, you know, inhabits that sumptuous of all palaces at Rome with door-cases *giallo antico.* He is not quite so magnificently lodged here, his portal being garnished with beef-steaks. He would allow but seven sequins a-month for his lodging, and nobody would

* John, Duke of Argyll.

† At the dispersion of the treasures at Strawberry Hill, in 1842, this celebrated speculum of Kennel coal was purchased by Mr. Strong of Bristol.—Ed.

house him at that rate but a butcher in Piccadilly. The Duke of Gloucester went to thank him for his civilities to the Duke of York—and was let in! Think of two such demigods visiting at a shamble. I will reserve the rest of my paper for the event of to-morrow. If the war with the City goes on, Prince Giustiniani may happen to be as much surprised as we are at his lodging in a butcher's shop.

Stay, I must say a few words more. What felicity that Patch had saved Masaccio's designs before the fire, and what pity St. Andrea's* body was not burnt instead of them! The body might have been supplied by the first malefactor's that was hanged, and might have passed for a miracle. I shall be very thankful to you for any two views of Florence, not as *sopra-portas*, for my houses are not furnished at all in the French style, but as pictures, and smaller than that size; and I give you other thanks for what you have sent me. I will try to serve Patch in his subscription, but the best way will be to have his brother advertise. However, I will send for the brother and talk to him.

Tuesday, March 26.

The die is cast. The army of the House of Commons has marched into the City, and made a prisoner; but as yet no blood is spilt; though I own I expected to hear there was this morning when I waked. Last night, when I went to bed at half-an-hour after twelve, I had just been told that all the avenues to the House were blockaded, and had beaten back the peace-officers,

* Masaccio's paintings were in the church of St. Andrea at Florence.

who had been summoned, for it was *toute autre chose* yesterday; when the Lord Mayor went to the House, from what it had been the first day. He was now escorted by a prodigious multitude, who hissed and insulted the members of both Houses, particularly Lord March and Sullivan, who escaped with difficulty, and the latter of whom they had mistaken for the elder Onslow. However, many retired with the Lord Mayor, who went away ill at ten at night, and the rest were dispersed by the extreme severity of the weather, and by the lateness of the debate, which lasted till past four in the morning, when they sent Alderman Oliver to the Tower, who would make no submission, though the Ministers wished to be quit of him on easy terms. The Lord Mayor is to be judged to-morrow.

Many unpleasant passages there were for the Court. Sir George Savile left the House, protesting against their proceedings, and was followed by some of his friends. Colonel Barré went farther, said in his place that the conduct of the House was *infamous*, that no honest man could sit amongst them, and walked away—and the House was forced to swallow so ungrateful a bolus. Nor was this all. Alderman Townshend charged all their arbitrary proceedings *on the baneful influence of the Princess Dowager of Wales*—yes, in those very words.

Well! what think you now? When so many men have ambition to be martyrs, will the storm easily subside? Oh! Sir Robert, my father, would this have happened in your days? I can remember, when on the Convention, Sir William Windham, no fool for that

time, laboured to be sent to the Tower, and my father told him in plain terms he knew his meaning, and would not indulge him. This generation is wiser, for I am sure Alderman Oliver is not, and yet he has carried his point. But I grow old, and gossip. One always prefers the wisdom of one's own age. My father's maxim, *Quieta non movere*, was very well in those ignorant days. The science of government is better understood now—so, to be sure, *whatever is, is right.* Adieu!

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LETTER CLXXII.

Arlington Street, March 30, 1771.

THIS is not a letter, but a codicil to the last. I think we are going into great violences. A prodigious mob came from the City with the Lord Mayor on Wednesday, and a greater was at his service, but he would not encourage it. The two Foxes were assaulted and dragged out of their chariot, and escaped with difficulty. Lord North was attacked with still more inveteracy; his chariot was torn to pieces, and several spectators say there was a moment in which they thought he must be destroyed. Sir William Meredith, though in Opposition, and a Mr. La Roche, saved him from the fury of the people. He went into the House and spoke with great firmness, and as much coolness. Others were insulted, but not so outrageously. At twelve at night, the Ministers proposed to commit the Lord Mayor only to the Serjeant-at-Arms, on account they said of his ill-health, but, in truth, to avoid extremities; he protested

however that he was perfectly well, and chose to accompany his brother Alderman to prison; on which he was sent to the Tower. The Deputy Serjeant who attended him, he had great difficulty to save from the fury of the populace, who insisted on hanging him on a sign-post.

The Ministers are more moderate than their party, who demand extremities. Young Charles Fox, the meteor of these days, and barely twenty-two, is at the head of these strong measures, and equally offends the temperate of his own party, and the warm ones of the Opposition. Sir George Savile left the House, protesting against the persecution of the citizens; and Colonel Barré in plainer terms told the House on Wednesday night, that their conduct was infamous, that no honest man could sit amongst them, and walked away.

The King was excessively hissed yesterday as he went to the House. Charles Fox again narrowly escaped with his life, a large stone being thrown at him, which passed through both the windows of his chariot. Two committees are appointed; one to enforce the powers of the House; the other to inquire into the riots. I wish both do not inflame the riots! The riots will certainly encourage war from abroad, and war will return them the compliment. But it were talking to the winds to urge this!

The House is adjourned to Monday se'nnight, but the committees are to continue sitting. Neither side will probably allow itself holidays; and, when the City of London gives the toast, will neither Ireland nor America pledge it, who are both enough disposed to

drink out of the same goblet? Well! still I say, to be sure I grow very old, when I cannot discover the wisdom of these proceedings. They cannot mean quiet and peace, for we had but just obtained both strangely. We seem to be governed by the predominant fashion, gaming. A gamester loses, regains what he had lost, and continues to play on.

Pray whom is your neighbour, the Empress-Queen, going to bet with, for I see she is putting all her troops in motion? The poor people are everywhere but fish and counters. To what end do modern philosophers write against all this? Kings and Queens never read essays of morality. They only read books of devotion, which are too civil to meddle with crimes of State. Parsons are like the law, and seem to think a King can do no wrong. How their Majesties will stare in the next world, when they come to plead, that their ministers are answerable for all they did in this, and find their plea overruled! Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXXIII.

Arlington Street, April 26, 1771.

You may wonder that I have been so silent, when I had announced a war between the House of Commons and the City—nay, when hostilities were actually commenced; but many a campaign languishes that has set out very flippantly. My letters depend on events, and I am like the man in the weather-house who only comes forth on a storm. The wards in the City have compli-

mented the prisoners, and some towns; but the train has not spread much. Wilkes is your only gunpowder that makes an explosion. He and his associates are more incensed at each other than against the Ministry, and have saved the latter much trouble. The Select Committees have been silent and were forgotten, but there is a talk now of their making some report before the session closes.

The serious war is at last absolutely blown over. Spain has sent us word she is disarming. So are we. Who would have expected that a courtezan at Paris would have prevented a general conflagration? Madame du Barri has compensated for Madame Helen, and is *optima pacis causa.* I will not swear that the torch she snatched from the hands of Spain may not light up a civil war in France. The Princes of the Blood are forbidden the Court. Twelve dukes and peers, of the most complaisant, are banished, or going to be banished; and even the captains of the guard. In short, the King, his mistress, and the Chancellor, have almost left themselves alone at Versailles. But as the most serious events in France have always a ray of ridicule mixed with them, some are to be exiled *to* Paris, and some to St. Germain. How we should laugh at any body being banished to Soho-square and Hammersmith? The Chancellor desired to see the Prince of Conti; the latter replied, "Qu'il lui donnoit rendez-vous à la Grève."

If we laugh at the French, they stare at us. Our enormous luxury and expense astonishes them. I car-

ried their Ambassador, and a Comte de Levi, the other morning to see the new winter-Ranelagh * in Oxford Road, which is almost finished. It amazed me myself. Imagine Balbec in all its glory! The pillars are of artificial *giallo antico.* The ceilings, even of the passages, are of the most beautiful stuccos in the best taste of grotesque. The ceilings of the ball-rooms and the panels painted like Raphael's *loggias* in the Vatican. A dome like the pantheon, glazed. It is to cost fifty thousand pounds. Monsieur de Guisnes said to me, "Ce n'est qu'à Londres qu'on peut faire tout cela." It is not quite a proof of the same taste, that two views of Verona, by Canaletti, have been sold by auction for five hundred and fifty guineas; and, what is worse, it is come out that they are copies by Marlow, a disciple of Scott. Both master and scholar are indeed better painters than the Venetian; but the purchasers did not mean to be so well cheated.

The papers will have told you that the wheel of fortune has again brought up Lord Holderness,† who is made governor to the Prince of Wales. The Duchess of Queensberry, a much older veteran, is still figuring in the world, not only by giving frequent balls, but really by her beauty. Reflect, that she was a goddess in Prior's days! I could not help adding these lines on her—you know his end:

> Kitty, at Heart's desire,
> Obtained the chariot for a day,
> And set the world on fire.

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* The Pantheon.

† Robert Darcy, last Earl of Holderness.

This was some fifty-six years ago, or more. I gave her this stanza :

To many a Kitty, Love his ear
Will for a day engage,
But Prior's Kitty, ever fair,
Obtained it for an age !

And she is old enough to be pleased with the compliment.

My brother * has lost his son ; and it is no misfortune, though he was but three-and-thirty, and had very good parts; for he was sunk into such a habit of drinking and gaming, that the first ruined his constitution, and the latter would have ruined his father.

Shall I send away this short scroll, or reserve it to the end of the session ? No, it is already somewhat obsolete : it shall go, and another short letter shall be the other half of it—so, good night !

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## LETTER CLXXIV.

Arlington Street, May 8, 1771.

I WISH, my dear sir, I could be as useful to you in solid, as I am in trifling, commissions. I bought your fans the very next day, the best, the most fashionable, and the prettiest I could get, and carried them directly to Mr. Davenport myself. Unluckily, he had sent away your liveries, but promised me the fans should set sail with the first vessel he could find. I

* Sir Edward Walpole.

have sent you six; two of two guineas, two of a guinea and a-half, and two of one guinea. I went to the utmost because you will be little in my debt, Lord Beauchamp owing me six guineas for the wine you sent him; and I think after all the expenses I have put you to, your conscience need not be much embarrassed about the remaining four guineas.

I wish with all my soul you may obtain an increase of pay, but as it is not to be got from a fan-shop, I doubt nobody could serve you less in that article than I, who never deal at the great warehouses. I am still more awkwardly situated about the offer of your house.* You may probably have heard enough to make you think *I* was just the proper person to make the tender; but for that very reason I am the most unfit. I firmly believe the *solidity* of the connection I hint at,† but not knowing it *authoritatively*, I have most sedulously avoided even the appearance of supposing there is any such connection at all. It would not become my character to wink at any such thing, and I never will know it, but in a light proper to be known. It is not enough for me to be persuaded that it is strictly honourable; I will run no risk of having a *démenti*. In the mean time, not to neglect your concerns, I have desired Lord Hertford to make the offer, as if coming through him from you. I dare say it will be guessed that it passed through me to him. It will be taken

* To the Duke of Gloucester, who was expected at Florence.

† The marriage between the Duke and Lady Waldegrave.

equally well from you, and will mark at once my *fierté*, and how incapable I am of taking liberties upon so equivocal a footing. In truth, I believe there is no prospect of the journey. The person, who is extremely good and amiable, is in danger of taking a much longer journey. The disorder in his family has settled on his lungs, and produced a confirmed asthma. He falls away every day, and was very near death within this month. I grieve for the fate of the survivor, nor guess what it will be, but it was not in my power to prevent her risking so much!

The Parliament rose suddenly this morning—sudden it was, though advanced but a day—but as the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver are at liberty the instant of the prorogation, the King was advised to go to the House to-day before the mob was apprised of it. It was not very dignified counsel; but, in truth, that whole business has been wofully conducted, and has heaped nothing but disgrace on the House of Commons; who, instead of vindicating their authority, have betrayed the utmost pusillanimity. It was begun unadvisedly, and has ended piteously. We are threatened with violent rejoicings and illuminations to-morrow, and, therefore, as we expect much riot, I suppose there will be little, for nothing ever happens that is premeditated; mobs, especially, are the creatures of a moment, not of thought. Wilkes, though he has his rebels like other monarchs, triumphs over the Government and the House of Commons. The latter did not dare to let him appear before them.

The Duke of Choiseul is still more popular against the Court. His head is on every snuff-box, and the women are so violent, that every day the wives of some of the *new* Parliament make them resign their functions. I should not have expected so much sense from him, but the Prince of Conti has made an admirable answer to the Dauphin. The latter said, "Papa, Roi est bien le maître pourtant!" "Oui, Monseigneur," replied the Prince, "et si fort le maître, qu'il peut donner sa couronne à Monsieur le Comte d'Artois."* That is just what Majesty gets when it arrives at its utmost wishes! It overturns the constitution, and then nothing is left to overturn but the succession. The Prætorian, or Preobazinski guards, must achieve the first, and soon learn that *il ne tient qu'à eux* to dispose of the second. I think it very probable that the Chancellor† may not be suffered to wait so long, but may be despatched by the people. *Quieta non movere* was my father's motto, and he never found it was a silly one. However, I am very glad Monsieur de Maupeou and Madame du Barri thought they knew better; they have saved us a war.

Thursday, 9th.

I have had a note from Mr. Davenport to say he would send the fans by the first ship, and that he would write you word he had a parcel for you. I have told him how much haste you are in for them, and begged him to forward them with the utmost expedition.

* Youngest brother of the Dauphin. † Maupeou.

Lord Hertford has made your offer, but the great Duke's will be accepted, who has promised to act like a private friend; so you have all the merit, and avoid the trouble and expense. I wish he may be able to undertake the journey.

Lord Halifax has been at the point of death; but, though out of immediate danger, is said to be incapable of business, and Lord Suffolk, I hear, is to replace him immediately. I do not know that this is true.

The summer, I think, will be so quiet that our correspondence will not be very lively. In July I propose a little journey to Paris for about six weeks. We have had five winters since Christmas, and not an appearance of spring till within these three days. Your snow will soon be compensated by glorious suns; but in England we every year give ourselves airs of being disappointed, though it is so very seldom we have any fine weather. I believe, if we did not read Virgil at school, we should never have invented names for distinctions of seasons. Somebody said lately that the winter was come over to pass the spring in England, but though well said, still it was an air. We live in the Northern Ocean, and our nabobs that plunder the Indies, cannot contrive to import an ounce of eastern climate. Adieu!

Friday morning.

Wednesday night did not pass quietly; besides the rejoicings in the City, the mob demolished all the

windows of Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, and a much greater assaulted Lord North's with threats of pulling it down. The guards were sent for in time; and all is quiet.

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## LETTER CLXXV.

Strawberry Hill, June 8th, 1771.

I DO not believe that Orestes and Pylades were half so punctual correspondents for thirty years together. But do not let us be content and stop here; thirty years more will finish the century; I have no objection to living so long: I hope you have none.

You say I do not cite the dates of your letters, but I did better, I executed your commission the instant I received it, and it is no fault of mine if Madame Santini is not at this moment fanning herself with one of the fans. I should be inexcusable if I neglected the few commissions you give me, when you are so kindly punctual about mine.

Mr. Chute, who dined here to-day, told me he had just heard that Lord Halifax is dead. It was hourly expected when I came from town on Thursday. Lord Suffolk was most talked of for his successor; and then the Privy Seal will be contested by two ex-ministers, the Duke of Grafton and Lord Weymouth.

I find you have been a great advocate for Le Fevre's medicine for the gout. He is already quite exploded

here; and, about Liege, where he lives, they abhor him. He performs none of his promises, but in producing an immediate fit, which can be done without a medicine. Mr. Chute and I are strong bootikinists. He, indeed, is a marvellous proof of their efficacy. He (so many years devoured by gout) has not had a fit in his feet these four years; and, when it comes in his hands, though it lasts very long, he never has three days of sharp pain.

I do not know whether the Russian fleet will pass the Dardanelles, but their army *must not* pass the Danube. It is certain that Prince Lobkowitz was sent to Petersburgh to make this declaration in the names of the Empress-Queen and Emperor; and there is such a dearth of roubles in the other Empress' treasury, that she must stoop to the prohibition. The peace itself would be made, yet as there is provision of money and troops made at Constantinople, the Sultan dares not but try another campaign, for fear of an insurrection. I like to see these haughty sovereigns obliged to draw in their talons, or put them forth, whether they will or not.

Some of their representatives are to dine here to-morrow. Indeed you ought to come too: there will be a little *corps diplomatique*—the French, Spanish, and Austrian Ministers. I am sorry this card cannot sail till Tuesday, when it will be too late. Seriously, how happy it would make me to see you here, *salvâ* your *dignitate*. Strawberry is in the most perfect beauty, the verdure exquisite, and the shades vener-

ably extended. I have made a gothic gateway to the garden, the piers of which are of artificial stone, and very respectable. The Round Tower is finished, and magnificent; and the State Bedchamber proceeds fast; for you must know the little villa is grown into a superb castle. We have dropped all humility in our style: yet, fond as I am of this place, I am going to leave it for some weeks: in short, on another journey to Paris. Nothing, I think, but my dear old woman*. could draw me so far; and nothing but her shall I see. The time of year disculpates me from the scandalous surmise of going to divert myself. If the disturbances there should happen to amuse me, why that is excusable in an ancient politician; and no philosopher has forbidden our being entertained with public confusion. I shall, in truth, only look on with the same indifference with which I see our own squabbles. The latter are drawn to the dregs. I shall set out on the 7th of July, and be here again by the end of August. If you write to me in the interval, direct to London; for you know we always have found more difficulty in sending our letters by the straight road than by that round-about. I shall probably write again before I go, though this is not a time of year when I can have much to tell you, and at present less than ever. If Count Orloff takes Constantinople, the bombs will be heard at Paris before they can be reverberated from Florence. Lord Bute is arrived in good health, but they say much emaciated, and looking much older.

* Madame du Deffand.

He is going to marry his fourth daughter to Lord Finlater,* the son of our old acquaintance Lord Deskford. The Queen is brought to bed, I think, of a son, but an eighth prince or princess is nobody's business but the compiler's of the Court-calender. I am told that at Paris I am to go distracted about the Dauphiness, and to recover my wits by seeing the Comtesse de Provence.† Good night! I reserve some paper in case I should learn any European secrets from my guests to-morrow.

Sunday night.

My party has succeeded to admiration, and gothic architecture has received great applause. I will not swear that it has been really admired. I found by Monsieur de Guisnes that, though he had heard much of the house, it was in no favourable light. He had been told it was only built of lath and plaster, and that there were not two rooms together on a level. When I once asked Madame du Deffand what her countrymen said of it, she owned they were not struck with it, but looked upon it as natural enough in a country which had not yet arrived at true taste. In short, I believe they think all the houses they see are gothic, because they are not like that single pattern that reigns in every hotel in Paris; and which made me say there, that I never knew whether I was in the house I was in, or in the house I came out of. Two or three rooms in a row, a naked *salle-à-manger*, a

* That marriage did not take place.

† She was very ugly.

white and gold cabinet, with four looking-glasses, a lustre, a scrap of hanging over against the windows, and two rows of chairs, with no variety in the apartments, but from bigger to less, and more or less gilt, and a bed-chamber with a blue or red damask bed; this is that effort of taste to which they think we have not attained—we who have as pure architecture, and as classic taste as there was in Adrian's or Pliny's villas. Monsieur de Guisnes is very civil, and affects to like even our gardens, though I can but doubt whether they do not use more of Nature's beauties than a Frenchman can be brought to feel.

Lord Halifax died yesterday. The Bishop of Osnaburg is to have that riband to which the Earl had never been installed. As there is going to be an installation at the expense of the Crown, the bishop's will be lumped with it, and save such another cost. Lord Hyde,* they say, is to be Chancellor of the Duchy, in the room of Lord Strange,† who died suddenly last week. I don't know how the greater places are to go. If I hear to-morrow, when I shall pass through London in my way to Lord Ossory's, I will tell you.

Monday night.

It rains great places and preferments. The Bishop of Durham‡ died last night; but what is that to you or me? You no more desire to be a right-reverend

* Thomas Villiers, brother of the Earl of Jersey, and afterwards Earl of Clarendon.

† Only son of the Earl of Derby. ‡ Dr. Trevor.

father in God than I to be Secretary of State. Yet how many are hankering after these things, without reflecting that they are more likely to follow in death than in succession! It is excusable in children to cry for rattles; for they don't know how soon they are to part with them. I don't mean by this to give myself any preference in wisdom; I have a house full of playthings, and am as fond of them as any bishop is of his bishoprick.

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## LETTER CLXXVI.

Strawberry Hill, June 19, 1771.

I ANSWER your letter, as you desire, the moment I receive it, that is, acknowledge the receipt of it; but I am sorry Mr. Davenport's punctuality is not as well ascertained as mine. I have sent him your letter, and wish it may correct him for the future. But do not you deserve to be scolded, too, when you talk of my getting paid? How many score of commissions am I in your debt? Or is this a reprimand, and a prohibition ever to employ you again?

I know no news but newspaper news, which is seldom new but by being false. The Duke of Grafton has certainly got the Privy Seal: it is not being proud.* In France, the Duc d'Aiguillon is at last Minister: it is not being timorous. I expect to find

* The Duke had been Prime Minister.

a doleful scene in that country: tyranny and poverty are trying which shall have the honour of conferring total ruin on it. It is fortunate for us that Louis the Well-beloved has preferred Ministers who will undo his own country, to one* who had an ambition of undoing his neighbours; and it is unlucky for Corsica that so amiable a monarch did not make his option sooner. It looks as if he himself was fond of both sorts.

Wilkes seems destined to confound all his adversaries. He carries the palm triumphantly from Horne,† who has proved a very dull fool—not that I have read half their correspondence; but at least Wilkes maintains his empire over the mob without the benefit of his clergy. The Court profits by their civil war, and we are as quiet as ever I remember the season. Wilkes's canvass for sheriff just stands in place of a considerable horse-race.

I am writing to you in the bow-window of my delicious Round Tower, with your Bianca Capello over against me, and the setting sun behind me, throwing its golden rays all around. Are you never to see this castle? It is not a hovel like Lady Mary Wortley's *château*, of which she used to brag to the Florentines. My trees flourish so exuberantly, that I am every day clearing away; and every bough that is lopped lets in new verdure, gaiety and prospect. From such a scene one looks down with contempt or pity on Messieurs Maupeou and D'Aiguillon; with greater on Monsieur de Choiseul, if he is sorry to be at Chanteloup.

* The Duke de Choiseul. † Parson Horne.

If he were here at this moment, I would say, "Look at yon sinking beams; his gaudy reign is over; but the silver moon above that elm succeeds to a tranquil horizon, and seems to enjoy the serenity of the evening, with more passionate though with fewer admirers! If she gilds no objects, remember she scorches none."—Oh! a charming idea, no doubt, Monsieur de Choiseul would conceive of the pleasure of sitting in a silent window alone, admiring the changes of an evening landscape, and writing to a distant friend! 'Tis below the dignity of ambition to taste a satisfaction that any common individual may enjoy! Crowds must be witnesses to the luxury of our situation, or it loses its quintessence; and yet I, who was born in the cradle of that greatness M. de Choiseul doats on, thank heaven for having given me no inclination to sacrifice my repose to a chimera! As an acquaintance, the world amuses me; it is horrible to be its master or its slave. Adieu! my dear sir: it will not be long, I hope, before I write to you again from this very spot!

Thursday, June 20.

I have been dining at Lord Buckingham's at Marble Hill.* He has three fine children by his first wife; † and has got a pretty, agreeable young wife; ‡ but it was a melancholy day to me, who have passed so many agreeable hours in that house and garden with poor Lady Suffolk.

* At Twickenham, built by Henrietta Hobart, Countess of Suffolk, aunt of Lord Buckingham, to whom she left it.

† Daughter of Sir Robert Drury. ‡ Sister of W. Conolly, Esq.

## LETTER CLXXVII.

Arlington Street, Saturday noon, July 6, 1771.

I AM not gone; I do go to-morrow, and this letter will not set out till after me, as there is no foreign post till Tuesday. I only write to tell you that my nephew,* Lord Cholmondeley, is gone to Spa, and thinks of frisking through Italy before the Parliament meets. If he comes to Florence, I know how kind you will be to him. He is a good young man, and I hope will not make a bad old one; but of that I know nothing—nor ever shall.

We are told the Jesuits are restored in France. *That* I shall know in two or three days. Pray take notice that two years ago I foretold this. Nor do I brag of it now, but to show that once in my life at least I guessed right.

Wilkes is another Phœnix revived from his own ashes. He was sunk—it was over with him; but the Ministers too precipitately hurrying to bury him alive, blew up the embers, and he is again as formidable as ever; and what will seem worse, he must go into the very closet† whenever the City sends him thither with a message. You and I, and all very wise men, laugh at luck and fatality, and such essences as we know do not exist; but pray let us confess honestly that we cannot wonder if the unilluminated populace are staggered on some occasions. Does there not seem

* Only son of George Lord Malpas, who was son of Mary, daughter of Sir Robert Walpole.

† The King's closet.

to be a fatality attending the Court whenever they meddle with that man? Does not he always rise higher for their attempting to overwhelm him? What instance is there of such a demagogue, subsisting and maintaining a war against a King, Ministers, courts of law, a whole legislature, and all Scotland, for nine years together? Masaniello did not, I think, last five days. Wilkes, in prison, is chosen member of Parliament, and then Alderman of London. His colleagues betray him, desert him, expose him, and he becomes Sheriff of London. I believe, if he were to be hanged, he would be made King of England—I don't think King of Great Britain.* Well, in the mean time I will go and see the reverse; a whole nation and every Parliament in it in opposition to the Crown, and the courts of law suppressed by the Chancellor. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1771.

I COULD not have laid out my holidays more conveniently (if I may be wicked enough to call a suspension of our correspondence so) than by fixing on the time I did for going to France. Nothing has happened here that would have furnished a letter, and there I heard and saw enough for a volume: I must try to abridge my materials.

For the misery of his people, and for the danger

* Meaning that the Scots hate him too much.

of his successors (if he escapes himself) the King, I think, will triumph over his country: a victory most Kings prefer, not only to peace, but to foreign laurels. The Princes of the Blood are firm, without spirit or sense: the nobility have as little of either; the vigour of parliamentary remonstrances are hushed by the English remedy—bribery; and the people curse the King, the Chancellor, the mistress; and starve. Besancon, Douay, Toulouse, Grenoble, and by this time Bordeaux, have lost their Parliaments, or accepted new ones. In some are erected superior councils — this variety proves how wrong the system is, or how incomplete. The only good attained, is the diminution of law-suits; many preferring to compound their quarrels, rather than apply to the new judicature.

In the mean time the Chancellor does as much hurt *against* all law, as any of his profession ever did *by* law. He is very able, very enterprizing, and after being the most servile flatterer, proves the most inhuman tyrant. Everybody is pillaged, and numbers ruined. The army is much reduced, and if corruption does not prevent it, their finances will soon be in good order. The besotted old *Bien-aimé* * neither desires this increase of power, nor feels for the sufferings it occasions; but shudders for his own life, and yet lets Abigail, who has still less sense than himself, plunge him into all these difficulties and shame. This street-walker has just received the homage of Europe. The holy Nuncio, and every Ambassador but he of

* Louis the Fifteenth.

Spain, have waited on her, and brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Fuentes* alone would neither bend the knee to her nor to the Chancellor. The Dauphiness, who is governed by her husband's aunts, paid no regard to her good mother's† instructions, and would not speak to the mistress at her presentation. The Duc d'Aiguillon is not so refractory: he not only visits her publicly, but *very privately*—yet he gains little ground with the King. The Chancellor seems to think Devotion a mistress better suited to the monarch's age, and meets him often at Sœur Louise's‡ cell at St. Denis. This Princess is undoubtedly a Papal engine. The reform of convents does not proceed: and Sœur Louise is supposed to have effected a considerable disgrace. The Bishop of Orleans, a *bon vivant*, and friend of Choiseul, had the *feuille de benefices*. Madame Victoire drew him into some conversation on the times. He was cautious; yet, as she is a *Frondeuse*, he opened his mind a little to her. She betrayed the conversation to her father, and the prelate is banished to an abbey, and not permitted to go to his mother, who is past fourscore. Madame Victoire's treachery and folly, both to her party and to the bishop, is laid to the saint her sister.

The Duc de Choiseul acts joy, spirits, happiness: receives all the world, treats all the world, and thinks himself not only the greatest Minister, but the most beloved that ever was; not reflecting how foolishly

* The Spanish ambassador. † The Empress-Queen.
‡ The King's youngest daughter, who was a Carmelite nun.

he threw away his power; and insensible to the ruin he is drawing on his friends and on himself too. It has been the fashion to ask leave to visit him. Very few have been refused, but the answer is, *Je ne le defends, ni le permets.* This has passed for permission; but the King has said he would remember those who should go,—and he will not want remembrancers. In short, the proscription has already commenced. The Prince of Beauveau is removed from the government of Languedoc, worth 103,000 livres a-year, under pretence that having opposed the fate of the Parliament of Paris, he could not be proper to dissolve that of Toulouse. The Duc de Duras is to lose the government of Bretagne, and I know from very good authority that not one person placed by Choiseul but will be removed within a year. His own Swiss Guards are to be taken away, *bongré, malgré.*

This prospect is by no means unfavourable to *us.* France and Spain on cool terms; the army no longer the favourite object,—perhaps disgusted—certainly dispirited, and liable to be soured by the crowds of discontented,—the *Vive le Roi* certainly extinguished for the present; a dauphin more unpromising; an old King, like Hercules betwixt virtue and vice, torn different ways by a bigot-daughter and an idiot mistress; a government dissolved and not resettled; and, to crown all, a divided and rival Ministry. I do not think the Duc d'Aiguillon of abilities to reconcile this chaos. He is very gracious, but very dark, and *by some circumstances,* I believe so great a politician,

that he is a very little one; that is, he will spring a mine to blow up an ant-hill.

This is a slight sketch of my observations. Paris suffers grievously; the ruin of so many fortunes has introduced the severest economy. The retirement of the Parliament, and the numbers that depended on them, has carried away, they say, forty thousand persons. Even fashion and whim are out of fashion. I heard of but one instance of remaining luxury: Mademoiselle Guimare, a favourite dancer, now belonging to the Prince de Soubize, and lately to the Bishop of Orleans, who kept her in lodgings within the precincts of a convent, is building a magnificent house. The *salle à manger* is to have *des serres chauds* round it, with windows opening into the room, that she may have orange-flowers and odours all the winter.

As your own country is never behind the rest of the world in extravagance and folly, I must tell you of a set of young men of fashion, who, dining lately at the St. Alban's tavern, thought the noise of the coaches troublesome. They ordered the street to be littered with straw, as is done for women that lie in. The bill from the Haymarket amounted to fifty shillings a-piece: methinks I am glad the Carabiniers, and the Grenadiers of France are cashiered,—the sight of them before a tavern would make our young men miscarry.

I arrived but last Friday, and am delighted with a wedding that is going to be in my family. Lord Villiers, only son of Lady Grandison, a very rich Irish peeress, is going to marry Lady Gertrude Conway,

Lord Hertford's eldest unmarried daughter. She is very pretty, though not so beautiful as her two next sisters. The bridegroom is well enough in his person, sensible enough, and very good-natured. I know you interest yourself in whatever pleases me, and therefore I tell it you, though you know neither of the turtles.

Pray what is become of Constantinople? Are the Russians to be taking it and taking it as long as the Greeks Troy-town? This is the third summer that the Russians have been *sauntering* towards the Turkish capital.

I beg against the proper season you will send me a parcel of roots of Iris. They are for my dear old friend at Paris to put into sweet bags. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXXIX.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 26, 1771.

I AM sorry that so watchful a cat should have let its mouse* slip at last, without knowing into what hole it is run. To the Dissidents in Poland! think you? — why, they have not a cheese-pairing left. I should rather think to Spain, and to be wafted to Ireland. King Carlos is absurd, mortified, angry, disappointed, and obstinate: intends, soon or late, to attack us, and may have pitched on the Pretender for

* The Pretender had suddenly disappeared from Florence, and it was not known whither he was gone.

his pioneer. If it should be so, it will be diverting to hear the loyal ejaculations of the Scotch, nay, of even more than one in each family: I question if my Lord Dunbar* himself is a Jacobite now—except in principle. Should I guess right, you must positively come home: you prevented his receiving the crown of England at Rome, and must now keep him from reaching it at Dublin. I know nothing in his favour but the rule of contraries — as his father missed the crown when Queen Anne was on his side: and he himself when all Scotland and half England were Jacobites, when he had conquered his way to Derby, and almost everything but his own fears; he may be more fortunate when even the University of Oxford scarce drinks his health. But no, this is an age in which all Kings light upon their legs: the Czarina lives yet; the King of Portugal has survived the expulsion of the Jesuits; the King of Prussia escaped from twenty battles, and the *well-beloved* Louis from the rage of a dozen demolished Parliaments. I had forgot,—not all Kings in this age, — poor Peter III. did not escape from his wife.

*Apropos*, I hear that the Parliament of Bordeaux has made as much stand as they could, and enough to frighten the victorious Richelieu out of the remains of his old senses. They said they knew not what he meant by *lettres de cachet*, they acknowledge no such power. He retreated to his seat at Fronsac, and has despatched a courier to Versailles for a squadron of

* Lord Mansfield's brother.

powers. I suppose it will end in his plundering the city, and building a new *pavillon* in his garden: do you know they call that which he erected with the spoils of the Electorate, *Le Pavillon d'Hanovre?* * I have seen it; there is a chamber surrounded with looking-glasses, and hung with white lutestring painted with roses: I wish you could see the antiquated Rinaldo that has built himself this romantic bower! Looking-glass never yet reflected so many wrinkles: you would think Rinaldo had lived till now.

I am very sorry to confirm poor Mr. Gray's death. He died of the gout in his stomach; I fear, partly by quacking himself, and partly by the horrible neglect of the Professor of Physic at Cambridge, who would not rise out of his bed to assist him. He has left nothing finished; in truth, he finished everything so highly, and laboured all his works so long, that I am the less surprised.

We have nothing in the shape of news, for I do not reckon the factions in the City of London, which is divided and subdivided amongst a parcel of people, whose names are almost all unknown but to themselves. The papers are filled with their squabbles, but I never read such annals! They would tire the voluminous patience of Holinshed and Stowe.

We do not believe your Russian naval victory; it is a tedious war, and dull enough to afford the invention of another game of chess. Your brother the Emperor is still more unintelligible: what is he doing with

* On the Boulevard des Italiens at Paris.—Ed.

his armies, and marches and counter-marches without an enemy?

You have received, I hope, the letter I wrote to you immediately on my return from Paris. Monsieur de Boisgelin was just returned thither, being recalled in anger, for meddling impertinently in some court-squabbles at Parma: I heard the detail, but have forgotten it—one cannot be looking through a microscope at the politics of such a diminutive Government. Our correspondence is revived, but I am always glad when it wants forage.

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LETTER CLXXX.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 22, 1771.

THE clouds that concealed the Pretender's elopement seem to disperse. It is affirmed that he is in the *Highlands* of Poland, with the *Catholics* and *Dissidents*. I hear from Paris that his cousin, the Marquis de Fitz-James, is going to him with a commission from Louis the *well-behated*. When I was there, I know they were sending to Poland between twenty and thirty officers, headed by a Monsieur de Vieumenil, reckoned one of their best military heads. I do not comprehend it, and pity the poor *true blue* Sobieskists, who are to be betrayed and drawn into their destruction by this handful, like the Jacobites in Scotland. One wants, indeed, many other lights: if the Emperor and King of Prussia approve this plan, what can thirty Frenchmen add to it? If they do not, what can that

diminutive troop effect in opposition? France is wofully fallen indeed, if, after arming the Ottoman Sultan against the Czarina, they are reduced to play off this puppet against her. 'Tis the lap-dog that yelps when mastiffs are worrying one another. I am curious, however, to see farther into the scuffle. If what I have told you proves true, I shall no longer believe Spain concerned in the project. Fuentes and Caraccioli * persist in refusing their homage to Madame du Barri. The Duc d'Aiguillon thinks he has made her amends by insisting on his mother visiting her. I pity the old duchess, who had held out nobly. It is a worthy act of duty in a son! The Abbé Terray has recovered his ground, but at the expense of sacrificing his mistress, a Madame de la Garde, who scandalized a Court where the Du Barri triumphs. This creature, and a Madame Sabatin, mistress of the Duc de la Vrillière, kept open shops for the disposal of preferments. The three Sultanas were called *Les Trois Dis-Graces.*

Mr. † and Mrs. Hamilton from Naples passed one day last week here, and I left them this morning at Park Place. She looks better, but the climate affects her strangely. Vesuvius has burnt him to a cinder.

I have no news to tell you. You know as much of Wilkes and Townshend as I do, from their memorials in the newspapers. The famous *Junius* seems at last to issue from the shop of the former, though the composition is certainly above Wilkes himself. The styles are often blended, and very distinguishable, but nobody

* Neapolitan minister at Paris. † Afterwards Sir William.

knows who it is that deigns to fight in disguise under Wilkes's banner. So far this *unknown* knight will not resemble his predecessors in romance, that he probably will not disclose himself and demand *the Princess** in marriage.

This letter, short as it is, must depart; I have nothing to add to it. I live chiefly here, and alone; and though I can amuse myself, it is not so easy to amuse others with the history of solitary hours. My house is comfortable and charming, and except the great bedchamber on which I am at work, quite finished. I go but little abroad, for as I told Mrs. Hamilton, and she agreed to it, our climate is delightful *when framed and glazed*, that is, beautiful through a window. Thus my time steals away peaceably and agreeably, but is not a theme for a letter; and, therefore, when I am reduced to talk of myself, and have nothing to say of myself, it is time to bid you adieu!

October 24th.

I was just going to send this letter to London for the post to-morrow, when I received yours of the 24th of last month, with the inclosed deputation.†

* The Princess of Wales was much abused in the satirical writings of that time, particularly in Wilkes's.

† For the nephew to be his uncle's proxy at the installation of Knights of the Bath.

## LETTER CLXXXI.

Arlington Street, Nov. 7, 1771.

I SCARCE know where to begin, and I know not what to say on all the melancholy and strange events that I heard yesterday. My deputy * died suddenly on Monday, and it brought me to town. On my way I called at Holland House; Lord Holland's servant came in and said the Duke of Gloucester was dead. When I arrived here, I found your two letters, in which you give me so particular and sensible an account of his illness, and of the very attentive and proper part you have acted. The instant I had dined I went to Lord Hertford, who told me no confirmation was come of the Duke's death; but he, as well as I, from your letters, conclude it over!—But, unfortunate as this event is, what will be your astonishment, when at the same time I tell you that the very same moment brought to light, at least to the public, an event that made that loss almost overlooked? In short, the Duke of Cumberland, as rash and absurd as the Duke of Gloucester was decent, prudent, and amiable, went off, last Friday the first, to Calais, and wrote to the King, that he was married to Mrs. Haughton,† and that she was *enceinte*, and gone with him. You know of no Mrs. Haughton but the Duke of Grafton's Mrs. Haughton, the Duke of Dorset's Mrs. Haughton, every body's

* Grosvenor Bedford, Esq.

† The name was Horton, not Haughton. She did not prove *enceinte*. She was the widow of — Horton, Esq., of Catton, in Staffordshire.—ED.

Mrs. Haughton—faith, I do not know whether it would have been so improper a Mrs. Haughton as her he has married—and yet this is a woman of virtue! But think what a bitter pill to the Royal Family, when you hear it is the sister of the very Colonel Lutterel whom the Court crammed into the House of Commons in the room of Wilkes—so fatal is that man to the Crown, and such triumphs start up for him, even whenever he is at the lowest ebb. Think how he will exult at the Court's being lashed with the instrument they prepared for him!—no mortification can equal it! But what will you say to this mad boy, when you know, that if the world says true, his mother was thought at the point of death at the very instant he chose to make his declaration. All last week it was affirmed that she has a cancer in her mouth, and that it was got into her throat. She, however, went to the King at Richmond on Sunday. What a dreadful catastrophe; if she *is* dying, to learn the death of so respectable a son, and such a completion of folly in another son, who had already furnished such matter for abuse! * as Shakspeare says,

> The funeral baked meats
> Will coldly furnish forth the marriage supper.

The new Princess of the Blood is a young widow of twenty-four, extremely pretty, not handsome, very well made, with the most amorous eyes in the world, and eyelashes a yard long. Coquette beyond measure, artful as Cleopatra, and completely mistress of all her

* By his intrigue with, and letters to Lady Grosvenor.

passions and projects. Indeed, eyelashes three quarters of a yard shorter would have served to conquer such a head as she has turned. I need not hint to you how unfortunate an event this is at the present moment, and how terribly it clashes with the situation of another person! * a person whom I most heartily pity, and whom I did all I could to preserve from falling into so cruel a position. I know not what she will, or is to do! You, it is possible, by this time may know more than I do—at least I surmise so by the command laid on the physicians to notify the worst.

Well! altogether here is a strange scene opened! The circumstances make it different from anything history can furnish; and I wish history may not have more to do with the consequences! Had the Pretender met the younger brother at Genoa the other day, instead of the elder, and laughed, I should not have wondered. How singular too that the Duke of York should land and die at Monaco, and the Duke of Gloucester at Leghorn! But reflections rise on reflections, and what has happened almost makes one superstitious, and what may happen makes one almost prophecy. We expect the fatal courier every hour, and as this letter cannot depart until to-morrow, I will say no more to-day on this extraordinary crisis.

You will certainly have no occasion to think of your installation now for some time. Your brother sent me a mighty sugared answer to my letter, and has written to your nephew to be your proxy. I hope heartily that

* Lady Waldegrave, married to the Duke of Gloucester.—Ed.

he will accept it. The person recommended to you is by no means a proper representative for you: he is an apothecary's son, and was forced into the place he enjoys by the late Duke of York, whose intimacies were the prototype of Mrs. Haughton's consort. I doubt your nephew must be knighted, which I imagine was a great object with your candidate: but as your nephew must have your title, he can surely not hesitate to make a step towards it. We shall have full time to discuss all these matters. Thank you for the roots of iris.

Alderman Townshend has refused to pay the land-tax, on pretence that Lutterel's election deprives the county of Middlesex of being represented. His goods are seized, and the cause would have always made noise enough—what will it not make now, when the royal wedding is coupled with it? I begin to question whether this will be the *age of abortions*, as I have always called it, and hitherto always found it. Methinks it will rather be the age of seeds that are to produce strange crops hereafter.

Friday, 8th.

The courier that arrived yesterday has made everybody happy with the fortunate news that the Duke of Gloucester was out of danger on the 25th. The King is so overjoyed, that he seems to forget the other misfortune, and all the world does justice to the merit of the recovering Prince. I would fain flatter myself it will last. I am impatient for another letter from you to confirm the good news. Adieu!

## LETTER CLXXXII.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 18, 1771.

It is but just to acknowledge the good news you send us. I rejoice very disinterestedly at the Duke of Gloucester's recovery. I put no trust in princes: I doubt, I may add, for there is *no health* in them. Nor shall I be surprised if all the flattering symptoms vanish, and, in a few posts, contradict the prognostics of the surgeons. The Princess is said to be much relieved by taking hemlock. For the third object of the present curiosity, deep silence is observed at Court on that point. The public is not so reserved: a thousand tales are coined, which I spare you, for I have neither seen nor heard anything that had wit enough to deserve being sent so far. Indeed, as I pass my time here chiefly and alone, you will not wonder that I do not even know where the new Court* resides: the last place named was Arras.

You please me with the kind things you say of my nephew, Lord Cholmondeley. He is amiable and seems good. I do not pretend to judge of such young men, who do not easily take to us *ancestors;* but it would be a satisfaction to me not to have all my nepotism as worthless as if I were a Pope. If Lord Cholmondeley goes to Rome, pray tell him I wish he would bring me a head of himself, by Pompeio Battoni.

We are again bickering, I think, with Spain; but

* Of the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland.

a spark here, and a cinder there, do not make a bonfire. King Carlos hates us ever since Naples; but we have a navy that, while it adds to the provocation, does not tempt him to display his anger too openly. Your old friend, Lord Sandwich, is activity, industry, and knowledge, in person; and the most proper man in the world to be at the head of the Marine.

I have heard nothing from your brother, or of your nephew. I fear the latter is negligent; for I cannot conceive his having any aversion to the commission. It is, hitherto, of no consequence, but in preventing me from giving an answer to Lord Rochford.

Mr. Hamilton's *Correggio* is arrived. I have seen it: it is divine—and so is the price; for nothing but a demi-god, or a demi-devil, that is, a nabob, can purchase it. What do you think of three thousand pounds? It has all Correggio's grace, and none of his grimace, which, like Shakspeare, he is too apt to blend and confound. I myself expect a treasure to-morrow, a complete suit of armour of Francis the First,* which I have bought out of the Crozat collection. It will make a great figure here at Otranto. Mr. Chute is come to welcome the Monarch at his landing. It is cruel to me never to see *you* here: what an addition would it be to the tranquillity I have had the sense to give myself! It would be delicious, if Time did not

* This beautiful specimen of art was the work of Benvenuto Cellini. It was complete to the knees. The material is steel inlaid with gold, and enriched with bas-reliefs of battle and hunting subjects, of most elaborate design and exquisite taste. It was sold at the memorable dispersion of the treasures of Strawberry Hill, for 320*l.* 5*s.*—Ed.

disperse or carry off one's friends and contemporaries. As to young acquaintance, there is no uniting the conversation of different ages. One is checked every moment: one cannot make an allusion to what one has seen, without being reduced to explanations that become, or seem to them, old stories. The times immediately preceding their own are what all men are least acquainted with. A young man knows Romulus better than George the Second. On the other hand, the young have new words, new language, new amusements; and one can no more talk their talk, than dance their dances. *You* and *I* could at least talk of a rigadoon, or of Booth and Mrs. Oldfield; and, were you your own master, methinks you would prefer it to name-days and christenings of baby future sovereigns. It amazes me when I see men, by choice, push on towards a succession of courts. Ambition should be a passion of youth; not, as it generally is, of the end of life. What joy can it be to govern the grandchildren of our contemporaries? It is but being a more magnificent kind of schoolmaster. I was told that I should regret quitting my seat in Parliament; but I knew myself better than those prophets did. Four years are past; and I have done nothing but applaud my resolution. When I compare my situation with my former agitated and turbulent life, I wonder how I had spirits to go through the former, or how I can be charmed with the latter without having lost those spirits.

Arlington Street, Nov. 21st.

The town furnishes no more than the country, and is almost as empty. The wandering Court is again at Calais; where the Prince has given a ball to the garrison. 'Tis piteous, — ay, and too silly to talk of. Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 15, 1771.

I AM vexed that you have not had perfect contentment about your Pisan Palace; yet I am persuaded that no incivility was meant, for the Prince is naturally obliging: but I will say no more on this subject. The other brother is returned with his wife; has been privately forbidden the Court; and it has been intimated, as a general secret which every body is expected to know, that the same persons must not go to St. James's and to the new married couple. The Princess Dowager is said to be much better.

A *public* brother of yours is going to be your brother in another sense: the Duke of Chandos's red riband is to be given to Mr. Hamilton, *from Naples*, and Sir Francis Delaval's to Sir Charles Hotham: yet I don't believe the installation will be advanced. Your *real* brother says not a word of your nephew; I don't know whether he is more communicative to you.

The Ministers are in great joy: news of the restoration of Falkland's Island to us is arrived. It ought to be general joy, for it secures peace. There have

been endeavours to persuade both us and Spain that we were out of humour with one another, but neither country would take the hint. Thus all our storms are blown over, except in Ireland, and that does not seem to threaten much, for the money-bills are passed, and, consequently, the Opposition are at the King's mercy, as he might now prorogue their Parliament without inconvenience to himself. What ten years of vexation might have been avoided, if folks would have adhered to my father's maxim of *Quieta non movere!*

What do you say to the rape and almost murder of the King of Poland? I should think it must alarm King Louis's old wound, which is very apt to quiver. I hear he says, that he would not for a great deal play so deep a game as his Chancellor does. The other assassinated Monarch's * Prime Minister has been in danger too—Œyras. There is no harm if such tyrants as Œyras and Maupeou are frightened a little.

Dec. 17.

I was in hopes of thanking you for the receipt of the pictures and iris roots, for the ships are arrived, but I have not got the things from the Custom-house. However, there is no being too premature with gratitude, and I do thank you very much *d'avance.*

By a more authentic account that Princess Amelia gave me last night, there seems to be small chance of another Princess's recovery.†

We are so much accustomed to politics, that people

* Of Portugal. † The Princess-Dowager of Wales.

do not know how to behave under the present cessation. We can go into the City without being mobbed, and through Brentford without "No. 45" on one's coach-door. Wilkes is almost as dead as Sacheverell, though Sheriff. You will not be sorry that I have no more to tell you, and consequently will excuse the shortness of this, but one cannot make letters without political straw.

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LETTER CLXXXIV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 28, 1771.

I THIS minute receive yours of the 9th, from Pisa, and am much concerned at the account you give of the Duke's alarming situation. Though I have not the honour of knowing him, it is impossible not to feel for his danger, as it is impossible not to respect his character. I thought, as the physical folks here did too, that his recent attack would remove the malady, but I now doubt it very much. He certainly apprehends his own danger, and has, I suppose, other reasons to add to his low spirits; but I cannot believe, as you think, that he is ignorant of what has happened: that history, for many reasons, is more likely to have added to his unhappiness. You, my dear sir, I fear, for I seem to perceive, though you do not express it, are not without difficulties.

Pray assure Lord Cholmondeley how very kindly I take his messages, and how pleased I shall always be with any marks of his affection. The great differ-

ence of our ages prevents my flattering myself that his should be great, and it is to avoid being importunate that I do not trouble him much with marks of mine; but he may be sure of it, whenever he thinks it worth his while to seek it. I wish you would read this paragraph to him without telling him I desired you to do so. It is for his sake, between you and me, that I wish him to cultivate me a little more than he does. At the same time, I own to you that I do not esteem him the less for his not paying court to me; and should he become more attentive on your hints, I should still make allowance for that, as I have seen that his nature is not interested. I have lived too long to expect more than natural good disposition. It is not flattery I want, but so much intimacy with him as might give me opportunities of knowing him better; for though he is the relation on whom it would suit me best to fix my views, I cannot place them on an almost stranger, nor would think of it without another point that I wish could be brought about too. You will oblige me, therefore, my dear sir, extremely, if, after reading to him the passage above, you were to hint to him, that it would be prudent in him to make me his friend.

This must be absolutely from yourself, for I would not for the world enter into any engagements to him which I might afterwards disappoint, though from his own fault. Be so kind to us both as to sound him on his thoughts of marriage, and whether rank, beauty, or fortune, is his object. I have a person in my

eye who has both the former, and who has had the best education, and has the most charming character, with uncommon sense and prudence.* Fortune he will not want when the General † dies: but his consent must be fully granted, and therefore before I attempt any overture, I wish to know my nephew's mind, and then I would sound the General. You will see the extreme delicacy of all this, and I leave it totally to your discretion.

With regard to your own affair, I like your idea about the want of knighthood in the person who has applied to be your proxy; but for that very reason, I would be silent on it till the time is fixed, that he may not acquire it in the interim; and therefore I will not deliver your message to the Earl ‡ till then.

I have received Mr. Patch's pictures, and like them very well, but I think they are a little hard. I speak plainly, that he may correct. Thank you much for them; I should like to pay for them, if I thought you would allow me. The engravings from Fra. Bartolomeo disappoint me: I see none of the great ideas I thought I remembered in him: at least he is far below the amazing Masaccio. They are well engraved, except wanting a little more strength. The

* It is believed that the person here alluded to was the eldest daughter of his niece the Duchess of Gloucester by her first husband, Lord Waldegrave. She afterwards married the Earl of Euston, the present Duke of Grafton.—Ed.

† General James Cholmondeley, great uncle of Lord Cholmondeley.

‡ Lord Rochford had recommended a person to Sir Horace Mann for his proxy.

iris roots are still performing quarantine; but there is no haste.

News we have none, except from Ireland, where the Opposition gain frequent victories by the absurdity of Lord Townshend.*

The Princess Dowager is much better, and it is thought in no immediate danger.

The Swiss† are at last taken from the Duc de Choiseul, who resigned them handsomely, without haggling. It has softened his fall extremely. They give him three hundred thousand livres down, sixty more for life, and thirty to Madame de Choiseul, if she survives him. It is the exit of an English Minister, rather than of a French one.

Little Sorbe, the Genoese Minister at Paris, where he was born when his father was in the same character, is dead suddenly. It was a dirty, intriguing, sensible creature. I mention him because he was the vermin that instigated Choiseul to invade Corsica; and therefore his death, if sudden, was, at least, not early enough. Europe, Asia, and America, do not furnish me with another paragraph, though we have such magnificent fields for our correspondence. Good night, therefore, from one end of the world to the other! Yours *ubique*.

* The Lord Lieutenant. † The command of the Swiss Guards.

## LETTER CLXXXV.

Arlington Street, Jan. 14, 1772.

SIR CHARLES HOTHAM and Mr. Hamilton are to receive their ribands to-morrow, but certainly no installation will follow soon.

Do not be concerned at your nephew's want of attention to me: I am too old and too indifferent to every thing that does not disturb my tranquillity, which has long ceased to depend on the actions of others. One's mind suffers only when one is young, and while one is ignorant of the world. When one has lived some time, one learns that the young think too little, and the old too much, and one grows careless about both. I at least have contracted an ease in my temper, which diverts itself with most things, and takes few to heart. I think of my own nephew and yours with the same composure, as you saw by a letter I wrote to you lately. The friend the former has got is far from a proper one; I know a horrible story of him in his own family; but as I do not believe much in the duration of friendships, theirs will probably die away like others. For the fashionable discourse of young people, it is the nonsense of the moment. What is called *bon ton* is generally the tone of people that have not yet got into good company, because an affected tone is never used by really good company. Young men of sense lose it soon; young men who have not

sense keep it even after it has ceased to be any body's tone. Indeed, what is fashion? Is not it a persuasion that nothing was ever right till the present moment, and that the present moment will immediately be as wrong as all its predecessors? And can such a system be but absurd? And what notice does absurdity deserve more than being laughed at for an instant?

The current of time hurries every thing along with it, and if we have the patience to sit still and see it pass, it is sure of washing away our vexations, as well as our pleasures; and both being dreams, are not worth remembrance. I have attained so much habitual philosophy (for I believe in no other) that events which would formerly have distressed me exceedingly, do not now put me out of temper; as I experienced last week. A dozen powder-mills within two miles of Twickenham blew up last week, and almost levelled my castle as low as Troy. This is far from true; but the explosion really demolished four of my windows of painted glass, and broke as many more. I neither stomached it like a Stoic, nor d——d the undertaker of the mills like a Christian. I shall set about mending them with the patience of Penelope, though with the prospect of having them ruined again, for, as Mr. Bentley * said, in this country *abuses are freeholds*, and I do not believe the neighbourhood will get the mills removed. The

* Richard, only son of Dr. Bentley, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Duke of Northumberland,* to raise his rent a trifle, obtained an Act of Parliament for this nuisance; indeed, he got the consent of the gentlemen within the circuit, by promising they should be corn-mills; but the act was no sooner passed, than lo! they became powder-mills! and have torn the whole county to pieces!

The Parliament meets next week. There will, I think, be little to do, unless an attempt to set aside the subscription of the clergy to the Thirty-nine Articles should stir up a storm. Religious disputes are serious; and yet, can one care about shades of nonsense? Adieu!

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## LETTER CLXXXVI.

Arlington Street, January 21, 1772.

I MUST set you right, my dear sir, in an error into which I innocently led you; and am glad to be able to do it, as I am happy to find that a son of your dear brother is not always in the wrong. Your brother Edward never mentioned the proxyhood to Horace. This totally disculpates your nephew, who has now, in a very civil letter to me, handsomely and cheerfully accepted the office. This is the best I have to say on the chapter of nephews.

I doubt Lord Chatham has given you no reason

* Sir Hugh Smithson, who on marrying the heiress of Algernon, Duke of Somerset, who was son of the heiress of the Earls of Northumberland, was created Earl, and then Duke of Northumberland.

to make a panegyric on him. The ghost of old Horace would chuckle at the little regard I meet with from my nephews and nieces. Yet, will that not put us on a footing? The endeavours of my life have been to make them happy, rich and great, to save them from ruin and distress; not to cheat them of heiresses, and defraud them of estates entailed on them.

I am more wounded at the neglect shewn to *you;* nor can I account for it. It is out of character, and cruel. If I can guess at all at the person on whom your suspicion lights, it is a titular at Leghorn; but why not fathom it? One should be as much afraid of suspecting a friend wrongfully, as of finding him in the wrong. I know nothing of the man, but the zeal he showed about your riband: nor can I conceive how he should have influence enough to hurt you. It is a mystery which I cannot unravel.

I wish you were not exposed to these *désagrémens!* It has been my wonder how you could support the pertness and folly of all the youths who debark at Florence, and of all that govern them. Your fortune, I know, and am grieved, my dear sir, to know, is very moderate; but sure, as you are not young, tranquillity is the best riches. What are rank and fortune, if they do not secure content?

I was born at the top of the world; I have long been nobody, and am charmed to be so. I see the insolence of superiors; but how does it hurt me? They can neither frighten me, nor deprive me of any enjoyment. I laugh at their dignity, which I generally see built or

leaning on meanness and slavery; and which is best founded, their contempt or mine? To be determined to be content with little, is to determine that one's happiness shall depend on no one but one's-self; but, if consideration is one's point, I do not see why one should be satisfied without being emperor of the world. One superior would mortify me more than a thousand inferiors homaging me would contribute to my satisfaction; but when one is emperor of one's-self all is harmony and sunshine. And depend upon it, a moderate fortune is more capable of bestowing and ensuring that reign, than any position of grandeur. Were I rich, my nephews and nieces would be attentive and sincere enough; I like better to know their hearts.

We have no news; but to day is the birth-day of news: the Parliament meets; indeed, with a quiet aspect. Old Northington is dead, as he lived, cursing and swearing. He had taken an aversion to his son, and ordered the trees in the park to be cut down. The gardener, trusting to the proximity of his death, demurred. He perceived it, and turned him away: repeated his orders, but found that a dying lawyer could not quicken other people, more than other people can quicken a living lawyer. His servants went so slowly to work that only five oaks attended his funeral.

## LETTER CLXXXVII.

Arlington Street, February 3, 1772.

YOUR representative Majesty will be shocked to find how frequently your *family* * furnishes Europe with very unpleasant conversation. We are all gazing on what has happened in Denmark, where the Queen and her medical Prime Minister† have been seized; the former imprisoned, and the latter loaded with irons. It is certain that fame has been busy with their amours these two years—it is as certain that nothing is weaker than the little King; yet, as I look on revolutions as I do on private quarrels, in which both sides are generally in the wrong, I do not doubt but that it will come out that Her Majesty's *galantry* has been amply balanced by ambition and treachery. The Queen Dowager and her son, who have been brought forward, are both said not to excel the King in capacity; and if so, are only phantoms to decorate the conspiracy: but little is known yet, nor could I tell you much more than you will see in the public papers.

This tempest has clouded the halcyon calm that accompanies the opening of the session, where the voice of Opposition is no longer heard. In truth, the calamities of the Royal Family are much to be pitied, and the conclusion of the Princess's‡ life is very melancholy. I have heard nothing of her this morn-

* Meaning the English Royal Family, which Sir Horace Mann represented at Florence.

† Struensee, the King's physician. ‡ The Princess Dowager of Wales.

ing, but yesterday she was thought near her end. We every day expect like news from Naples.* The news of Princess Mary's† death came a week ago. She had long been ill, and never happy, though a most gentle and amiable being. There remains only Princess Amelia now of all the late King's children.

Friday, 7th.

I was ashamed to send away such a scrap, and therefore stayed till to-day's post to recruit it. The last accounts from Naples speak of the Duke of Gloucester as better; but for the Princess of Wales, I do not know at this moment whether she is not dead. She was last night at the extremity, and this morning the King forbade his levée. Her end has been expected these ten days; yet her courage was so great that she went out to take the air on Monday or Tuesday.

No more news yet from Denmark, which is extraordinary; but one should think, therefore, that nothing tragic has happened, or Mr. Keith would have despatched messengers faster. You may imagine the impatience of everybody to hear more of this strange revolution.

Yesterday there was a long debate, for *this* session, in the House of Commons. A petition was offered from two hundred and fifty divines, for abolition of the Thirty-nine Articles, that summary of impertinent folly. It was rejected at eleven at night by a large majority;

* Of the Duke of Gloucester.

† Landgravine of Hesse, fourth daughter of George II.

so much more difficult is it to expel nonsense than sense —for sense makes few martyrs. Will not the Jesuits think it hard upon them, that we are more absurd than France, or even than Spain? I begin to think that folly is matter, and cannot be annihilated. Destroy its form, it takes another. The reformation was only a re-formation. It is happy when attempts to serve or enlighten mankind do not produce more prejudice to them. What are the consequences of the writings of the philosophers, and of the struggles of the Parliaments in France? Despotism! Lawyers have been found to support it, and priests will not be wanting. Methinks it would be a good text for the gallows, "Upon this hang all the law and the prophets."

The Czarina has sent Lord Chesterfield a box of her own turning, *ornée*, says she vulgarly, *de son portrait*. It is in return for some compliments he paid her to her Ambassador. What miserable thirst of pedantic vain-glory! How sorry one should be to be obliged to answer civilly! What pains people take to have everything but common sense!

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## LETTER CLXXXVIII.

Arlington Street, Wednesday, February 12, 1772.

THE Princess Dowager died on Saturday morning. Nothing ever equalled her resolution. She took the air till within four or five days of her death, and never indicated having the least idea of her danger, even to

the Princess of Brunswick, though she had sent for her. Although she had convulsions the day before she expired, she rose and dressed to receive the King and Queen, and kept them four hours in indifferent conversation, though almost inarticulate herself; said nothing on her situation, took no leave of them, and expired at six in the morning without a groan. She could not be unapprised of her approaching fate, for she had existed upon cordials alone for ten days, from the time she had received the fatal news from Denmark! and died before she could hear again of her daughter.

The courier arrived in the evening; the new governing powers, whoever they are, whether the conspirators under the name of the Queen-Dowager, or whether that woman herself, have determined to manage the young Queen's honour as much as possible, but to press home the charge on Struensee for intending to drug the King's understanding in order to draw from him a cession of the Regency to that Physician-minister—a plan that, affecting decency, establishes the outrage—a plan, too, very difficult to believe; unless both the Queen and physician had taken drugs to intoxicate themselves first. Count Ostein, your late neighbour at Naples, is said to be deep in the revolution, as Sir William Hamilton told me he was sure it would appear; nay, on his first coming over, he mentioned this man to me as the genius of intrigue.

Our halcyon days are already clouded: the tempest has again risen in Ireland. Yesterday's letters from

thence say their Parliament is outrageous on a new Board erected there: they talk of sending a deputation of twenty-one members of the Commons to remonstrate to the King against it. Lord Townshend has occasioned all these troubles by the most extravagant behaviour. He lives with a carpenter and two more low fellows, and has written a satirical ballad on the chief men there, a mark of contempt that even money will not wipe out. The East Indies are going to be another spot of contention. Such a scene of tyranny and plunder has been opened as makes one shudder! *The heaven-born hero,** Lord Clive, seems to be Plutus, the dæmon who does not give, but engrosses riches. There is a letter from one of his associates to their Great Mogul, in which *our Christian* expresses himself with singular tenderness for the interests of the Mahometan religion! We are Spaniards in our lust for gold, and Dutch in our delicacy of obtaining it.

A terrible blow, which I have long foreseen, has fallen on Lord Hertford's family. His daughter-in-law,† a most amiable and good young woman, is dead, and her husband half distracted for his loss. You will pity Lord Hertford's situation: his daughter, Lady Gertrude was married to Lord Villiers on Monday morning, Lady Beauchamp died on Tuesday, and the Princess is to be buried on Saturday, for which, as Lord Chamberlain, he must give all the orders.

I cannot certainly refuse, when *you* ask it, to let

* Expression of Lord Chatham on Lord Clive.

† Daughter of Lord Windsor, and first wife of Lord Beauchamp.

Mr. Patch inscribe the designs to me, and my repugnance is lessened, as dedications are quite out of fashion. The way now is only to write the persons' names and titles—luckily I have none of the latter, and therefore the page will be so naked, that I think he had better pick out some young Lord Mæcenas, who will be fond of the compliment. If he insists on me, who had rather pass eldest, something in the manner of the enclosed card is all that is not only necessary, but all that I can admit.

I am not proud of being a favourer of the arts, but it is better than *Illustrissimos* and *Eccellenzas*. It is horrible to owe one's lustre only to an adjective; and I like *nobile Inglese*, because one may be a gentleman without being a lord, as many are lords without being gentlemen; so my humility, you see, is errant pride —yes, yes, we are pitiful creatures, and all impostors; always studying what the world will think of us, though hourly experience shows us how little it does think of us. Who will throw away a moment's reflection on a dedication to *me?* A mighty comfort truly to have the letters of one's name exist in a page that is turned over unread, in a hundred copies of a set of prints! Yet this is a farthing's worth of fame that many men covet! Is there a clown who scratches his initials on the leads of a church, who does not say to himself, *Exegi monumentum ære perennius?* I laugh at the world, I laugh at myself, and you will laugh at me too for this long monologue: pray do. There is little intrinsic in me but my invariable attachment to

you. It has lasted above thirty years, and I do not find that it breaks with age.

I must add a codicil, I find.

Codicil, Feb. 14, 1772.

Wish me joy : I have changed all my Roman medals of great brass, some of which were very fine, particularly a medaliuncino of Alexander Severus, which is unique, far the *uniquest* thing in the world ; a silver bell for an inkstand, made by Benvenuto Cellini.* It makes one believe all the extravagant encomiums he bestows on himself: indeed so does his Perseus.† Well, *my* bell is in the finest taste, and is swarmed by caterpillars, lizards, grasshoppers, flies, and masques, that you would take it for one of the plagues of Egypt. They are all *in altissimo,* nay, *in out-issimo relievo,* and yet almost invisible but with a glass. Such foliage, such fruitage! In short, it is fit to keep company with my Eagle and *your* Caligula—can one say more ?

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## LETTER CLXXXIX.

Arlington Street, March 5, 1772.

I DO not wonder you are impatient for Danish news, or that you mistake in what you say of their

* This beautiful work of art was executed for Pope Clement VII. by this inimitable artist. It is a mass of carving in altissimo-relievo. It had formerly been in the collection of the Marquis Leonati, of Parma, and was purchased by the Marquis of Rockingham, who exchanged it with Horace Walpole for some very scarce coins and medals. At the memorable sale at Strawberry Hill in 1842, it was bought in by the Earl of Waldegrave.—ED.

† A statue in bronze in the loggia before the old Palace at Florence.

King. Absurd he has been enough; but in the late revolution he was as much a sacrifice as his Queen; and is in effect not less a prisoner. There is not only a dead silence preserved here, but foreign Courts are kept as much in the dark. All I can collect is, that a knot of offended nobility have operated the change, headed by Rantzau, and two others, whose names I forget, and who never quit sight of the King; Rantzau even lying in his room. He signs, is forced to sign, every paper they offer to him, and I suppose is as roundly lectured as Charles II. was by the Kirk in Scotland before the battle of Worcester. The Queen Dowager, besides that she and her son are both fools, is said to be very ambitious; but whether they have real influence or not, I do not know. The poor little Prince Royal, of whose legitimacy there can be no doubt, whatever there is of his sister's, is never mentioned, and I suppose will be set aside as well as his father, when the junto have found, or pretended to find sufficient grounds for deposition: such are the blessed effects of despotism, even to the despots! When no resource but despair is left, the oppressors make much quicker work than can be done by the help of laws. Fifty grand signors have lost their heads for one Charles I., and he might have kept his, if he had not sultanized.

The Queen of Denmark, I am told, is to be despatched to Norway. I pity *her!* Her youth and inexperience could not suppose that she might not do anything, when she was told that she might do

everything. How many dismal hours will she have for fruitless reflections! How she will curse those who misled her, far more guilty than those who confine her! They are wise Princes who sacrifice their ministers, that seldom deserve better. Mr. Keith's spirit in behalf of the Queen has been rewarded. The red riband has been sent to him, though there was no vacancy, with orders to put it on directly himself, *as there is no Sovereign in Denmark to invest him with it.*

We have another scene coming to light, of a black dye indeed. The groans of India have mounted to heaven, where *the heaven-born* General Lord Clive will certainly be disavowed. Oh! my dear sir, we have outdone the Spaniards in Peru! They were at least butchers on a religious principle, however diabolical their zeal. We have murdered, deposed, plundered, usurped—nay, what think you of the famine in Bengal, in which three millions perished, being caused by a monopoly of the provisions, by the servants of the East India Company? All this is come out, is coming out —unless the gold that inspired these horrors can quash them. Voltaire says, learning, arts, and philosophy have softened the manners of mankind: when tigers can read they may possibly grow tame—but man!—

What shall I tell you to clear up your brow and make you smile again? Shall it be that Lord Chatham hunts and makes verses? He has written a copy to Garrick, in which he disclaims ambition. Recollect what I have said to you, that *this world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel!* This

is the quintessence of all I have learnt in fifty years! Adieu!

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## LETTER CXC.

Arlington Street, March 27, 1772.

THE Royal Marriage Bill is at last finished, after taking up nearly an hundred hours in the House of Commons. It was near being wrecked at last, being carried but by a majority of eighteen, while ten more, who would have been against it, were accidentally shut out, not expecting a division so soon. This is a mighty tumble from the first day of the session, when the Opposition had given up the game.

Never was a bill that gave more deep offence, and from mere speculation: the people did not interfere; nor was it a matter of popularity to oppose it. Lord Mansfield bears all the odium, and very deservedly, for no man else had a hand in drawing it, as ministers and lawyers declare. Lord North, though disliking the bill, supported it like a man; the rest treacherously condemning it, voting for it, and wishing it might miscarry.

Lord North is likely to have the Duke of Saxe-Gotha's vacant garter, the only one, except my father's, that has shone in the House of Commons since Queen Elizabeth's days.

If you want any more news, you must have it from Ireland, where there is a pretty substantial insurrec-

tion of four thousand men, calling themselves *Hearts of Steel.* Whatever their hearts are, their heads are of gunpowder. Poor souls! they have had thorough provocation; reduced to starve, to be shot, or to be hanged. They are tenants of Lord Donegal, driven off their lands because they could not pay hard fines for renewing their leases. Sixteen hundred horse and infantry are marched against them. We had better have wasted an hundred hours in redressing these misfortunes, than in framing acts against marriages!

It is confidently said, that the Danish *Hearts of Steel* have assured *us* that the Queen's life shall not be touched,—and this they reckon a favour. Struensee and Brandt are probably by this time no more.

We had last Sunday a most violent storm of thunder and lightning. The latter entered by the wire of the bell into Lady Mary Fox's dressing-room in Cavendish Square, where she was with her husband, Lord Robert Spenser and young Harry Conway. It melted the wire, fired the cornice, burned a chair, and damaged the floor. I cannot but think it was raised in a hot-house, by order of the Macaronis, who *will* have everything before the season.

The House of Commons is going to tap the affairs of India, an endless labyrinth! We shall lose the East before we know half its history. It was easier to conquer it, than to know what to do with it. If you or the Pope can tell, pray give us your opinion.

## LETTER CXCI.

Arlington Street, April 9, 1772.

It is uncommon for *me* to send *you* news of the Pretender. He has been married at Paris by proxy, to a Princess of Stolberg. All I can learn of her is, that she is niece to a Princess of Salm, whom I knew there, without knowing any more of her. The new Pretendress is said to be but sixteen, and a Lutheran: I doubt the latter; if the former is true, I suppose they mean to carry on the breed in the way it began, by a spurious child. A Fitz-Pretender is an excellent continuation of the patriarchal line. Mr. Chute says, when the Royal Family are prevented from marrying, it is a right time for the Stuarts to marry. This event seems to explain the Pretender's disappearance last autumn; and though they sent him back from Paris, they may not dislike the propagation of thorns in our side.

I hear the credit of the French Chancellor declines. He had strongly taken up the clergy; and Sœur Louise, the King's Carmelite daughter, was the knot of the intrigue. The new Parliament has dared to remonstrate against a declaration obtained by the Chancellor for setting aside an *arrêt* of 1762, occasioned by the excommunication of Parma. The Spanish and Neapolitan Ministers interposed, and pronounced the declaration an infringement of the family compact; the *arrêt* of 1762 has been confirmed to

THE COUNTESS DE LA MOTTE.

satisfy them, and the Pope's authority, and everything that comes from Rome, except what regards *the Penitential*, (I do not know what that means,) restrained. This is supported by D'Aiguillon and all the other Ministers, who are labouring the reconciliation of the Princes of the Blood, that the Chancellor may not have the honour of reconciling them. Perhaps the Princess of Stolberg sprung out of Sister Louise's cell. The King has demanded twelve millions of the clergy: they consent to give ten. We shall see whether Madame Louise, on her knees, or Madame du Barri, will fight the better fight. I should think the King's knees were more of an age for praying, than for fighting.

The House of Commons is embarked on the ocean of Indian affairs, and will probably make a long session. I went thither the other day to hear Charles Fox, contrary to a resolution I had made of never setting my foot there again. It is strange how disuse makes one awkward; I felt a palpitation, as if I were going to speak there myself. The object answered: Fox's abilities are amazing at so very early a period, especially under the circumstances of such a dissolute life. He was just arrived from Newmarket, had sat up drinking all night, and had not been in bed. How such talents make one laugh at Tully's rules for an orator, and his indefatigable application. His laboured orations are puerile in comparison of this boy's manly reason. We beat Rome in eloquence and extravagance; and Spain in avarice and cruelty; and, like both, we shall only serve to

terrify schoolboys, and for lessons of morality! "Here stood St. Stephen's Chapel; here young Catiline spoke; here was Lord Clive's diamond-house; this is Leadenhall Street, and this broken column was part of the palace of a company of merchants who were sovereigns of Bengal! They starved millions in India by monopolies and plunder, and almost raised a famine at home by the luxury occasioned by their opulence, and by that opulence raising the price of everything, till the poor could not purchase bread!" Conquest, usurpation, wealth, luxury, famine—one knows how little farther the genealogy has to go! If you like it better in Scripture-phrase, here it is: Lord Chatham begot the East-India Company; the East-India Company begot Lord Clive; Lord Clive begot the Maccaronis, and they begot poverty; and all the race are still living; just as Clodius was born before the death of Julius Cæsar. There is nothing more like than two ages that are very like; which is all that Rousseau means by saying, "give him an account of any great metropolis, and he will foretell its fate." Adieu!

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## LETTER CXCII.

Arlington Street, April 21, 1772.

We have little news. Everybody is gone out of town, or to Newmarket, for the Easter holidays. The Parliament will sit late on Indian affairs. There is a select committee appointed to examine into those

grievances; but I expect nothing from it. People will be very eager and very important at first. The criminals will puzzle and weary them; the idle will grow tired with the discussion; and the persevering will probably be bribed to drop or perplex the pursuit. Should you wonder if the most guilty, who are the most rich, should obtain a verdict of applause?

We have a strong fleet preparing, that has a formidable appearance. The world destines it against Copenhagen. I hope it will not sail. I believe a Prussian army would soon sail by land to Hanover, without waiting for a wind. We conclude Struensee* and

* Count Struensee was the son of a German divine of some eminence, who among other preferments was Professor of Theology at Halle in Saxony. His mother also was descended from a respectable family. They were both persons of the most simple and fervent piety. The Count was born August 5, 1737; he was educated first in the celebrated Orphan house of Dr. Franke, and subsequently at the University of Halle, where he devoted his mind to the study of physic, and where he is supposed to have first imbibed from his companions those infidel opinions which distinguished him through life. He afterwards settled at Altona. By what means he was first introduced to Christian VII., King of Denmark, does not appear, but in 1768 we find him raised to the rank of Physician to his Majesty, and appointed to attend him during his tour through some of the Courts of Europe. Struensee accordingly accompanied the King on his travels, and while at Paris formed an intimate friendship and connection with Brandt, a Dane of good family, and the subsequent associate of his crimes and of their punishment. During his stay in France, Struensee had insinuated himself into the good graces of the King; and soon after his return he was raised to the rank of a Privy-Counsellor, and presented to the Queen, with whom he soon became as great a favourite as with her husband. Brandt, who had been for some time disgraced, was recalled from Paris, and reinstated in his office at Court through the intervention of Struensee, and they were both shortly after raised to the rank of Count. The attachment of the Queen to Struensee exceeded, in appearance at least, the bounds of all moderation, but nothing criminal has ever been proved. Had Struensee

Brandt executed, and things seem to look but ill for the young Queen herself. There have been flying reports that she is dead, and to-day the papers say she is recovered of two fits of the cholic—the cholic sounds like a very political illness. It is certain that Baron Dieden, the Danish Minister, behaved with great

confined himself to politics, he might perhaps have escaped the weight of general indignation which at last overwhelmed him. His abilities were commanding, his powers of application great, his views enlarged, his resolutions rapidly carried into effect. Profligacy was the rock upon which Count Struensee split. Masked balls and other foreign amusements were about this time first introduced into the Danish court. Of these amusements Struensee was the indefatigable leader. At the conclusion of one of these festive occasions, given at the royal palace on 15th Jan., 1772, Roller Banner, after the company had retired, entered the bedchamber of the King, and informed him that there was a conspiracy against his person and dignity, at the head of which were his wife, Count Struensee, and their associates. He urged the King to sign an order for their immediate arrest. This, however, the King steadily refused. The Queen Dowager and Prince Frederic were then called in to enforce the requisition, and at last by positive threats obtained his reluctant signature. Not a moment was lost: Roller Banner went immediately to the chamber of Struensee, forced open the door, and found him asleep in his bed. The Count made no resistance. Count Brandt having made some show of resistance was at last compelled to surrender. Early the next morning the Queen was hurried away to Cronsburg, a fortress about twenty-four miles from Copenhagen. 'Tis an extraordinary fact, that had Struensee, according to his usual custom, gone to his apartments before the ball, he would have there found Count Rantzau, who was prepared to acquaint him with the whole conspiracy. Business, however, detained him till very late, and he went straight to the ball. Struensee was confined in a dark dungeon, chained to the floor. The popular animosity towards him was so extreme, that the commissioners were obliged to take his examinations within the citadel, with the bridges drawn up to prevent outrage. After more than two months examination, the commissioners passed sentence of death, forfeiture of estate, and degradation from their rank upon the two Counts. The King signed the sentence. The unfortunate criminals behaved with great intrepidity, and were publicly executed three days after the sentence was passed, surrounded by great bodies of troops.

insolence to the King the other day at the levée, laughing indecently to the Prussian Minister on the King's not speaking to him. His wife is just arrived, but has not been at Court, nor is visited by the great ladies. All this looks serious.

The Pretender is certainly married to the Princess of Stolberg, whose youngest sister is the wife of the Marquis de la Jamaique, son of the Duke of Berwick; but I do not believe she is a Protestant, though I have heard from one who should know, General Redmond, an Irish officer in the French service, that the Pretender himself abjured the Roman Catholic religion at Liege a few years ago; and that, on that account, the Irish Catholics no longer make him remittances. This would be some, and the only apology, but fear, for the Pope's refusing him the title of King. What say you to his Protestantism? At Paris they call his income twenty-five thousand pounds sterling a-year. His bride has nothing, but many quarters. The Cardinal of York's answer last year to the question of *whither his brother was gone?* is now explained: you told me he replied, *Whither he should have gone a year sooner.*

I am just going to the Opera to hear Milico, who sings to-night for the first time. I do not believe he will draw such audiences as Mademoiselle Heinel has done. The town has an idle notion that she made so much impression on a very high heart, that it is thought prudent to keep it out of her way. She is the most graceful figure in the world, with charming eyes, bewitching mouth, and lovely countenance; yet I do

not think we shall see a Dame du Barri on this side the Channel. Adieu!

P.S. I know Mr. Nichols,* and have a great regard for him. Pray tell him so, and show him so.

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LETTER CXCIII.

Arlington Street, May 13, 1772.

We have nothing new, but what is no longer so, the Danish tragedy. It was on the point of being a very deep one. Had our fleet sailed, the north had been in arms. Luckily it did its business without stirring out of port. The Queen goes to Zell. Struensee is gone to David Rizzio!

May 14th.

I hear to-day that the destination is changed, and that the Danish Queen does not go to Zell, but to Goerde, a hunting-seat near Hanover. The yacht to convey her is to hoist the Danish flag as soon as she goes on board. I have heard from good authority too, that her husband has twice endeavoured to get to her. I do not wonder we maintain her royalty, for by what code can a divorce pass on a legal marriage without the consent of either party? Even your match-making and match-dissolving operator at Rome would not allow of such a sentence. Adieu!

* A correspondent of Mr. Gray. See Mason's edition of Gray's Works.

## LETTER CXCIV.

Arlington Street, June 15, 1772.

HAVE not you felt very hot to-day: are not you a little fatigued? or have you no sympathy? While one Sir Horace Mann has been overwhelmed with ceremonies, was the other quite at his ease and insensible? In short, you have been installed to-day; and your representative is actually at this moment doing part of your honours to all the remaining town, at a magnificent ball that you and the knights your companions are giving at the Opera House. New Sir Horace has been quite kind to me, and pressed me to accept as many tickets as I pleased: but I could not bring myself to go into such a formal crowd in this warm weather, for it is the first summer we have had for years, and so I only took two tickets for younger performers. Pray, one Sir Horace, write very cordially to the other Sir Horace, for he has really done everything with the best grace in the world.

On Thursday there is to be a higher chapter, and Lord North is to receive the Garter.

Colonel Heywood* has sent me word of the box that is coming, so I conclude it will be taken care of.

The papers have told you what is indeed now very public, that the Duke of Gloucester, the very evening of his return, allowed my niece to acquaint her father that they have been married ever since September

* Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester.

1766. Lady Waldegrave does not take the royal title immediately, which I think very modest, but her father has shown the letter so much, that even copies of it have got about. For my own part, I have not at all changed my sentiments from the event, but still think her prudence to have been perfect. It is a great satisfaction that her character is invulnerable: and it gives me much more pleasure that she has preserved the honour she had, than that she has obtained this great honour, which does not dazzle me at all.

As the Parliament is risen, and everybody gone or going out of town, you cannot expect news. It is a kind of vacation that my letters are forced to observe. Your friend Lord Cowper has done a noble act: he has given a pension of two hundred pounds a-year to an old friend of his aunt, Lady Frances Elliot, who had left her but a bare thousand pounds: you cannot imagine how I admire him for it. Generosity is not the extravagance in fashion. Adieu! my dear sir.

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## LETTER CXCV.

Strawberry Hill, July 1, 1772.

It is true, you had forgot the list of maps, but I have received them in your postcript to-day, and as I shall be in London to-morrow, I will give my bookseller orders about them.

Will you believe, in Italy, that one rascally and extravagant banker had brought Britannia, Queen of

the Indies, to the precipice of bankruptcy! It is very true, and Fordyce is the name of the caitiff. He has broke half the bankers, and was very willing to have added our friend Mr. Croft to the list; but he begged to be excused lending him a farthing. He went on the same errand to an old quaker; who said, "Friend *Fordyce*, I have known several persons ruined by *two dice*; but I will not be ruined by *Four dice*."

As the fellow is a Scotchman, and as the Scots have given provocation even to the Bank of England, by circulating vast quantities of their own bank's notes, all the clamour against that country is revived, and the war is carried very far, at least in the newspapers. This uproar has given spirits too, to the popular party in the City, who are recovering some of the ground they had lost, and will beat the Court in the election of sheriffs, which I think was to be decided this morning: but, to say the truth, I know little either of this matter, or of the history of the bankers. Nay, I am not more *au fait* of Poland, where, they say, their Imperial Russian, and Prussian Majesties are going to make the royalty hereditary in the present King's person and family, by dividing his dominions amongst themselves. It is very kind, for as his relations were never born to crowns, they might, no more than he, know how to wear a very heavy one. But what do you say to the affronts offered to France, where this partition-treaty was not even notified? How that formidable monarchy is fallen, debased! It gives *us* brave time for playing the fool.

And so all the Pope's subterfuges cannot save the Jesuits! Methinks I wish the King of Spain would insist on *our* dismissing our black militia too. The peace between the Russians and Turks seems to be made, but I have never thought of that war, since I found that Constantinople was not to be taken. You know I do not love peddling politics. Nothing but a vast revolution could revive my taste for them. Indeed, Denmark is pretty well: Poland pretty well, —but can one care whether some thousand acres of Tartary, more or less, belong to the Grand Signior or the Czarina? Good night.

3rd.

Four more bankers are broken; and two men ruined by these failures (which are computed to amount to four millions), shot themselves the day before yesterday! It is now thought that Fordyce only advanced the crash, and that it would have happened without his interference, for the Scotch bankers have been pursuing so deep a game by remitting bills and drawing cash from hence, that the Bank of England has been alarmed, and was not sorry to seize this opportunity of putting an end to so pernicious a traffic. In short, it has given a great shock to credit, and it will require some time to re-establish it.

## LETTER CXCVI.

Strawberry Hill, July 23, 1772.

I OUGHT, I know, to have acknowledged sooner a letter of yours with very particular and kind advice, but I have waited to tell you that I had received the Cassolette of Benvenuto Cellini, and in hopes of having something to fill a letter; but Benvenuto is still performing quarantine, and nothing has happened worth repeating; so, lest the delay should make you apprehend for the safety of your letter, I will no longer neglect to thank you for it, though I can no further follow your advice than to be entirely a cypher in the affair. The part I have acted was dictated by the most scrupulous honour; I cannot repent it; I will not offer to atone for it. I may be hated, but I will not deserve to be despised. Honours I never sought, money I never valued; and if I did, I have what to my moderate wishes will always seem riches; and, what is more than all, I am fifty-five; is that an age to care for favour, or fear frowns?

We have had the only perfect summer I ever remember; hot, fine, and still very warm, without a drop of rain. Our verdure suffers, and so do the poor cows, but I have fretted over so many deluges, that I cannot help enjoying these halcyon days. They are indeed in all senses, halcyon. Not a cloud even in the political sky, except a caprice of Lord Hilsborough, who is to quit his American Seals, because he will not reconcile himself to a plan of settlement on the

Ohio, which all the world approves; but I should think this exit will terminate in a single alteration, and that Lord Weymouth will return to the Cabinet.

I am going for a fortnight or three weeks into Yorkshire, and hope by my return to find your positive directions about the maps, and Benvenuto in Arlington Street.

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LETTER CXCVII.

Arlington Street, August 3, 1772.

CAN I help writing to you, my dear sir, though I wrote but the other day? Benvenuto Cellini is this moment arrived, but so fine, so beautiful, so Raffaelesque, that I am charmed and ashamed; all gratitude and confusion. Is this what you called an old battered *meuble?* It is in perfect preservation, and every god and goddess as celestial as if just dropped from Heaven. You are too good and too magnificent: all I can do is to dedicate your offering in the chapel at Strawberry, which, by the way, is full of your presents. Your Caligula, your Castiglione, your Bianca Capello, your &c. &c. I wonder I have not a red face with blushing.

I chanced to be in town to-day, as I set out to-morrow to make a visit to Lord Strafford in Yorkshire, a very old friend too; for my old friends must give me great provocation before I change.

The most ancient of our acquaintance is dead at last, the Princess Craon. She has been sitting ready-

dressed for death for some years. I mean, she was always full-dressed, and did nothing, nor saw anybody; but now and then one of her old children or grandchildren.

The crack in credit is not stopped; two more persons broke last week; the lesser for two hundred and forty thousand pounds. There are some great Scotch lords in violent danger of becoming *de très petits seigneurs.*

In Denmark there seems to be another scene to come. Rantzau, the active and ostensible chief of the Revolution, is sent away with a pension. The principal governors are not known, which implies insecurity, unless, as I believe, the Prussian is the soul of the conspiracy. The Queen enjoys herself in Hanover: her sister of Brunswick has made her a visit. Shall you wonder if the Queen reappears in Copenhagen?

We have had and have the *summerest* summer that I have known these hundred years. We had really begun to fancy that some comet had brushed us a little out of the sun's way.

Once more accept my thanks: I never can give you enough, and yet I can never be more than I always have been, yours most affectionately.

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## LETTER CXCVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 29, 1772.

How can you speak so slightingly of the fine chest of Benvenuto? It is most beautiful, and fitted up in

the prettiest manner; nor do I at all perceive ill usage in it. Mr. Chute, who is here, is delighted with it; and the more, in that the top is copied from a most scarce print after Raphael, by Marc Antonio, which Stosch procured for him, and which is different from three others. The chest is deposited in a new glazed closet in a sumptuous state bed-chamber, which was finished but to-day, and which completes my house. It must terminate it, for I have at last exhausted all my hoards and collections: and such a quantity of things were scarce ever amassed together!

It has been said in our newspapers, that the Cardinal of York was dead; but your silence makes me conclude it is not true, which is probable too by its being in our papers, for they are absolutely nothing but magazines of lies, blunders, scandal, virulence and absurdity. Of true news we have none at all at present. This very brief epistle must, therefore, set out, ill provided as it is. Wars in Poland are out of our reach, and the Turkish war or peace is like a Chancery suit, of which one just hears once in a term, and then it goes to sleep again. Common, small events, like fine ornaments at a great height, will not do for so great a distance as we stand at.

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## LETTER CXCIX.

Strawberry Hill, Sep. 20, 1772.

THERE is an end of palliating, suppressing, or disbelieving: the marriage, my niece's marriage, is for-

mally notified to the King by the Duke of Gloucester. Many symptoms had convinced me of late that so it would be. Last Wednesday night I received a letter signed *Maria Gloucester*, acquainting me that the declaration has been made, and been received by his Majesty with grief, tenderness, and justice. I say justice, *tout oncle* as I am, for it would have been very unjust to the Duke of Cumberland to have made any other distinction between two brothers equally in fault, than what affection without overt acts cannot help making. This implies that the Duke of Gloucester must undergo the same prohibition as his brother did, which I am told is to be the case, though the step is not yet taken.

Having acted so rigorously while I could have any doubt of any sort left, it was but decent now to show that respect, nay gratitude, for so great an honour done to the family, which was due to the Prince and still more to his honour and justice. I accordingly begged the Duchess to ask leave for me to kiss his Royal Highness's hand, which was immediately granted. I went directly to the Pavilions at Hampton Court, where they were, and the Duke received me with great goodness, even drawing an arm-chair for me himself when I refused to continue sitting by the Duchess, or even to sit at all. He entered into the detail of his reasons for declaring the marriage, which he knew, by a former letter to the Duchess, I had approved their not publishing so far as her taking the title; and by something that dropped

apropos to the title, I am persuaded that my having obstinately avoided all connexion with him, had been a principal cause of his anger, though I do not doubt but some who were averse to the marriage had said everything they could to the disadvantage of the family; and as I had shown most disapprobation of the connexion, impressions against me naturally took the easiest root. Well! here ends my part of this history; I neither shall be, nor seek to be, a favourite, and as little a counsellor. Were I to advise, it should be to submit themselves entirely to the King. A Prince of the Blood, especially of a character so esteemed, may give great trouble, but whom do they hurt but their own family? The Duke of Cumberland was slighted by the Opposition, because he married the sister of the man in England the most obnoxious to them. To them the Duke of Gloucester is a very different case, and they not likely not to make the distinction; but I shall think the Duchess very ill-advised, if she does not dissuade everything that can displease the King. Her temper is warm, but she has an admirable understanding and a thousand virtues.

We have an instance in our family of real dignity of mind, and I set it down as the most honourable alliance in the pedigree. The Dowager Lady Walpole,* you know, was a French staymaker's daughter. When Ambassadress in France, the Queen expressed surprise

* Mary Magdalen Lombard, wife of Horatio, first Lord Walpole, and brother of Sir Robert Walpole.

at her speaking so good French. Lady Walpole said she was a French woman. "Française!" replied the Queen. "Vous Française, Madame! et de quelle famille?"—"D'aucune, Madame," answered my aunt. Don't you think that *aucune* sounded greater than Montmorency would have done? One must have a great soul to be of the *aucune* family, which is not necessary, to be a Howard.

Don't trouble yourself any more about the head of Stephens; I have got one here. I will subscribe for anything of Mr. Patch's, but have very little taste for those gates; though the originals are fine. Jesse's seem to me still less agreeable. Zoffani is delightful in his real way, and introduces the furniture of a room with great propriety; but his talent is neither for rooms simply, nor portraits. He makes wretched pictures when he is serious. His talent is, to draw scenes in comedy, and there he beats the Flemish painters in their own way of detail. Butler, the author of Hudibras, might as well be employed to describe a solemn funeral, in which there was nothing ridiculous. This,* however, is better than his going to draw naked savages, and be scalped, with that wild man Banks,† who is poaching in every ocean for the fry of little islands that escaped the drag-net of Spain.

So they do not think at Rome that the Pretender is worthy to have his face engraved! And yet they wonder the King of Spain is not a bigot, when even

* Zoffani went to Florence to paint a view of the Tribune.

† Sir Joseph Banks.

the Pope himself does not pretend to be so. It is well for the world when there is a grain of honesty amongst the great umpires of the earth. The King of Sweden is not quite so frank; he is taking oaths on the Bible that he means to keep the oath he is breaking! Truly, between him and the nobility, I am very neutral. Nobility harassed Poland, till they see it parcelled out as if a company of brokers had bought it at an auction; the brokers would have paid the purchase-money; three or four righteous Sovereigns are above such mechanic dealings! Oh! by how much is the only rational being* in the world, the worst! Pious Maria Theresa! Humane Joseph, the father and the idol of his people! Catherine, the legislatress! Well, I vow I think Frederick of Prussia, who never pretended to a single virtue, is the best of the set. He never had the impudence to deny that there is nothing he would not do. He quarters Poland, deposes the Queen of Denmark, inspires the nobility to enslave their King, and prompts the King of Sweden to enslave nobility and people; and yet one must say for him that he does not go to church, and invite God to be of the plot. A highwayman is an honest fellow compared to a priest who poisons you in the Sacrament. Bless us! bless us! who would not tremble to have power!

* Man.

## LETTER CC.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 4, 1772.

It is so very long since I heard a word from you, my dear sir, that I can almost fancy you have been laid up with the gout, as I have been. Yes, to-day commences the sixth week of my confinement, close confinement, almost to my bed, and strictly to my bedchamber. I have had this terrible illness in every limb and every joint; and it is but to-day that I can say every symptom is mending; but how the comfort of recovery is abated by the reflection on the returns I must expect of the same complaint! To what satisfaction can one look forward, when one sees the gout peeping over happiness's shoulder, and threatening one with being of the party? This thought puts an end to all views; I resign myself to age and its proper nurse, retirement; and only propose to be so reasonable as neither to wish to live or die.

Being in a perfect solitude here, and incapable, from weakness and languor, to see even my friends, you may conceive I can have nothing to tell you. The papers, my only informers, will have given you the whole history of Wilkes, of which I know not one tittle more. He was on the point of being Lord Mayor; and it would have been a phenomenon!

I have been told, I know not how truly, that there has been a revolution not only in the Czarina's Cabinet, but bedchamber; and that while her favourite Orloff was making and breaking the peace with the

Turks, a new Adonis or Hercules has supplanted him at St. Petersburgh. I have an opinion, that when violent systems once begin to be deranged, they do not last long; the present scene in the north is throughout so violent and unjust, that no reflecting being can be sorry for any catastrophe that befals any of the principal actors.

The iniquities of our East India Company and its crew of monsters seem to be drawing towards a conclusion, at least to be falling on their own heads. They have involved themselves in such difficulties, that the Parliament is forced to meet earlier than was intended, in order to assist or correct them. Tisiphone, Alecto, and Megæra should correct them!

Are Lord Huntingdon and Mr. Nichols still at Florence? You never say a word to me of the latter, who I thought likely to please you. Consider, we have not so many people left that we both know, that you need be sparing of naming those we can talk about. I am often going to ask you what remains there are of my Florentine acquaintance; but you never indulge my curiosity that way, though it would amuse me. Well.—Adieu!

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## LETTER CCI.

Arlington Street, Dec. 22, 1772.

Upon my honour I will pack up my house at Strawberry Hill, and send it you, if you send me any more presents. Why, it is full of them, and

belongs more to you than to me. Have you no mercy? Do you take me for an East Indian Governor, that you give me *lacks* of precious things, and suppose I have no conscience. Consider, how ill I have been, and that upon a sick bed at least one begins to have scruples. I could not look round me, without hearing a qualm whisper, *Restitution!* I cannot carry all your curiosities along with me, and to leave them behind will but add to my regrets. Well! but I will not die though, till I have seen Donatello.* After eleven weeks of suffering, I am come to town, and though rid of pain, cannot stir; consequently want amusement: Donatello will be a new plaything for an old child. Verily, I put myself in mind of Gay's sick fox, who after preaching to his young kin against *pullicide*, cries,

> But, hark! I hear a hen that clocks:
> Go—but be moderate in your food—
> A chicken, too, might do *me* good.

I am sorry to hear you know more of the gout than by what you have seen in your own family, and from my relation. The muscular pain in your breast came from cold that mixed with your disorder; I had it so violently for twenty-four hours, that I could only sit up double in bed. Three spoonfuls of Sir Walter Raleigh's cordial, known by the learned name of *Confectio Raleana*, took it entirely away, and a coughing with it, that exhausted me more than my gout, in this very

* A bas-relief of St. John by Donatello, which was placed in the chapel of Strawberry Hill.

fit. Why will you not have the bootikins? Not that I think the gout in your feet, when it begins so late, will do you anything but good, and prolong your life. What physician have you had since poor Cocchi? Not that I think any physician will do you more good than the gout will do you harm. The consolation in this terrible disorder is, that it does not want a physician; and, if it did!

I am sorry you saw no more of Mrs. Pitt.* She is the most amiable of beings, and the most to be pitied; her brutal half-mad husband, with whom she is still not out of love, and who has heaped on her every possible cruelty and provoking outrage, will not suffer her to see, or even hear from, one of her children. Of Lady Ligonier† she has heard too much. Then, all her beauties and good-nature are poisoned by deafness and danger of blindness. I cannot profess, ungrateful as I am, equal admiration for the other lady,‡ *my ingenious friend,* as you call her; a title I did not even know I was honoured with, and which I believe was assumed solely to make court to you. I will not call them pretensions, for there is a mixture of humility, but I own I think there is little more in that Dame than an ambition of having pretensions. What do you think of physicians, when they prescribe the air of Rome?

* Penelope, only sister of Richard Atkins, and wife of George Pitt, afterwards Lord Rivers. She is mentioned in Mr. Walpole's Epistle to Eckadt, the painter, on the Beauties.

† Eldest daughter of George Pitt, divorced for adultery.

‡ Mrs. Ann Pitt, sister of Lord Chatham, and Privy Purse to Augusta Princess of Wales.

We have no public news, but new horrors coming out every day against our East-India Company and their servants. The latter laid a tax on our Indian subjects, without the knowledge of the former. One article was twenty-four thousand pounds a-year—yes—to Mr. Sykes for his table—yes, yes,—and this appeared at the bar of the House of Commons from a witness he brought thither himself—*ex uno disce omnes.* Poor Indians! I fear they will be *disaffected.* Would you believe, I read that epithet the other day in a Portuguese relation of a meeting among their negroes in the Brazils. Hacked, hewed, lamed, maimed, tortured, worked to death, poor Africans do not *love* their masters! Oh, Tyranny, thy name should henceforth be Impudence! I am sick of all northern profligacy, of the Czarina's murders or amours; nor care whether she poisons Emperors or enriches her discarded lovers with provinces. I pity the Duchess of Parma, who is not allowed to choose her own little creatures; and yet I forgive the King of Spain for persisting in rooting out the Jesuits, though he does not know why. A whirlwind brushes the air and clears it. I do not know whether the honours of Mantua will console Lord H.* for those he idly forfeited here.

My niece of Gloucester's pregnancy has been declared here. I am as little clear whether that will be of any advantage to her.

The Prince of Condé has made his peace. The Duke

* Francis Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, Groom of the Stole to George III., from which he was dismissed.

of Orleans is supposed to have a hankering the same way, but is retained by his son. The Chancellor and d'Aiguillon are sworn foes; the mistress omnipotent. Some truth there was, I am assured by a person just returned from France, in the Prince of Conti's story. M. de Sartine, Lieutenant de Police, went with his officers to the Temple to search for libels: the Prince immediately stripped stark, and showed he had not a rag of paper about him. He told M. de Sartine that, knowing *him* for a man of honour, he would dispense with his stripping; he believed the other gentlemen were also men of honour, but not being acquainted with them, and having heard of officers of justice, who, being sent to houses of obnoxious persons to search for libels, had contrived to find libels which they had brought with them on purpose, he insisted on their stripping to the skin likewise, and when they had done so, he bade them go and search wherever they pleased. For my part, I did not expect so much cleverness from his Highness.

Adieu! my dear Signor *Donat*ello! It is a title I am sure you have purchased dearly. I shall grow afraid of Danaos et *Dona*ferentes: and the more you give me, the less I will be, yours ever.

P.S. I think I have received but one of the two letters you mention. I hope your new commissioner will be regular; but I must not complain when it is three months since I wrote myself. I never was so guilty—but the gout!

## LETTER CCII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 21, 1773.

I WISH I had received your last a few days sooner, as it would have told you I was mending, though slowly, and had begun to take the air. It would have saved your hearing I have a little relapsed, and by the time you receive this I shall probably be airing again. I do not expect much more yet awhile: four months, which ended yesterday, shatter such a frame as mine dreadfully; a codicil of ten or twelve days throw it back a vast way. The gout is returned into both feet, and a little into one elbow: I could rise neither yesterday nor to-day; but I flatter myself it is already going off, and will carry away these dregs which have set up for themselves. This is very well for the present; but what a prospect, if distemper, as they say, prolongs life, instead of shortening it! Your specimen, I trust, will have that effect, and that great torture is not a necessary ingredient of living.

To the latter part of my imprisonment I am very well reconciled: I have had a great deal of company. Five young ladies, the finest and youngest, have made it the fashion to visit me; and, as old ladies never fail to go after the young, I have wanted neither sort, so that I have had a constant circle, without living in a crowd, as every body else does. It suits my age, and the gravity I ought to have by this time, but which my spirits resist, as they have done my illness.

The people that sit at home hear all current news, true or false: I have none to tell you. The Parliament has nothing to do, or does nothing, for want of an Opposition; as if Ministers acted out of contradiction, like their antagonists. There are, indeed, bankruptcies, that shake almost our foundations; there is an eastern empire to be settled, governed, or held *in commendam;* and there is a little war, and not a little tyranny, at St. Vincent's; but none of them will give the Parliament a quarter of the trouble that a turnpike bill has often done. A few bankrupts have hanged themselves; we, I doubt, shall have hanged many poor Caribbees; and we shall *not* hang the East India Company and their servants, who *richly* deserve it. So will end the lesson of this year, though it is but just begun.

Your brother knight and Minister, Sir James Gray, is dead. He had a stroke of an apoplexy at Court, was carried home, and died the next morning. You may see I want news, when I acquaint you with what the newspapers told you a fortnight ago. It is time to finish, lest I should inform you of some event in last year's Historical Register.

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## LETTER CCIII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 17, 1773.

MR. PATCH brought me last week, with his brother's engravings, the beautiful St. John of Dona-

tello, and its as lovely and graceful pedestal. My dear sir, how I thank you! and how pleasing is your remembrance of me! but you must send me no more. I not only cannot accept more presents from you, but it would be heaping them on my tomb. My health is gone; pain is my lot; and what are the fair things of this world to me any longer? I leave off making purchases, and put a stop to my collection: it were the hoarding of a miser to pile my house with curiosities, when I shall enjoy them so little; and extravagance to buy, when my lease of life is running out very fast. It will be five months to-morrow that I have been a close and anguished prisoner: besides several relapses, a great cold has added a rheumatism in one side of my face; and when I shall be quit of my actual sufferings, what a shattered tenement will remain? How refit it before I am called upon to sustain another storm?

If I change this subject from my own person, I must not go out of the family: I have a melancholy tale to tell you of another branch of it, my Lord Orford. He had a cutaneous eruption. By advice of his *groom*, he rubbed his body all over with an ointment of sulphur and hellebore. This poison struck in the disease. By as bad advice as his groom's, I mean his own, he took a violent antimonial medicine, which sweated him immoderately; and then he came to town, went to Court, took James's pills, without telling him of the quack drops, sat up late, and, though ordered by James to keep at home, re-

turned into the country the next day. The cold struck all his nostrums and ails into his head, and the consequence is—insanity! To complete the misfortune, he is in a public inn, on the great road to Newmarket and Norfolk. His mother, the only proper directress, is in Italy; I am in the state of pain and weakness you know; and my brother has so long shut himself up in his own house, that no consideration could draw him out of it. I need but tell you, that his daughter, the Duchess, even in summer, could not prevail on him to wait on the Duke. It is an additional distress, that Lord Orford has for so many years dropped all connexion, all decency, with both my brother and me, that nothing but tenderness for his lamentable position could bear us out in assuming the least authority in what regards him. We have the precaution, however, not to take a single step but at the request of his physicians, or with the advice and approbation of his own most particular friends. His life, we are assured, is safe, and we have hopes given us of the recovery of his reason. His death would be the completion of the family's ruin: his continuance as he is, dreadful to himself and his friends: his total recovery liable to dismal moments for his own mind. His case is a heavy addition to my sufferings, and the anxiety I am under on every step I take in concert with my brother, lest, one way or other, we should be censured, cannot accelerate my recovery.

Let me turn, for your sake, from this gloomy scene

to a little episode of politics. What do you think has been the first event of this halcyon or soporific session, in which the Opposition had fairly retreated, confessing their impotence? Why, the first event of this calm was the shipwreck of the Prime Minister. Lord North was yesterday se'nnight beaten by 154 to 45, and on a question of Revenue. Oh! so you suppose the Opposition was lying in ambush at Knightsbridge, and attacked and defeated him by surprise. Well! you are totally mistaken in every part of your conjecture. The Opposition may be still at Knightsbridge, for aught I know; or, if on the field of battle, had no more share in the honour of the day than you or I. A friend made the fatal motion, a friend espoused it, friends supported and carried it. The outward and visible lines of this interlude were these: Lord Howe presented to the House of Commons a petition from the naval captains on half-pay for increase of allowance. Lord North had thought of taking no part, and had spoken to nobody against it; for, indeed, when all are on his side, how could he suspect that nobody would be with him? Sir Gilbert Elliot backed the petition; Lord North resisted; the consequence I have told you. The next day Lord North, angry with good reason, was on the point of making the affair very serious, and was with difficulty kept from resigning. The world is large in its comments on this mystery, and somehow or other the commentators do not in general impute very

pure motives to Sir Gilbert, though some make his conduct personal, others more cabalistic. I am no expounder of unrevealed revelations.

Yesterday the fortune of war was changed, and Lord North triumphed. It was on the affair of St. Vincent's, for the expedition to which Administration was called to account. Caribs, black Caribs have no representatives in Parliament; they have no agent but God, and he is seldom called to the bar of the House to defend their cause; 206 to 88 gave them up to the mercy of their persecutors; and as the Portuguese call *their* negroes, the Caribs are deemed *disaffected.* Alas! dare I complain of gout and rheumatism, when so much a bitterer cup is brewed for men as good as myself in every quarter of the globe! Can one be a man and not shudder at all our nature is capable of! I welcome pain: for it gives me sensibility, and punishes my pride. Adieu!

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LETTER CCIV.

Arlington Street, March 12, 1773.

I WAS a brute to forget desiring you in my last to thank Mr. Patch for his dedication of Fra. Bartolomeo. Sure the gout had fallen upon my memory! Pray, tell him it is very lame. His prints both from the Fratre and from Giotto are very well executed; but the former does not strike me like Masaccio. I used to admire his works equal to Raphael's; but certainly it must have been from the

colouring, not, as I thought, from his great ideas, for they are far inferior to those of his two contemporaries.

I am very sorry you feel like me, as well as sympathize with me: I hope your fit will neither be so sharp nor so long. I am just got out after two-and-twenty weeks; think of two-and-twenty weeks! And for walking, I might as well stay at home; but I force myself, lest I should take root in my chair.

They tell us the new Queen of Sardinia is another Elizabeth Farnese. France is making a new family-compact with that Court. The Comte d'Artois marries his sister of Provence's sister, and his sister Madame is to be Duchesse de Savoie.

Alack! All their Alps will be of no use in the north. French letters say troops are going from Dunkirk to Sweden, and that English men-of-war are to convey them. No soul tells us a syllable of this here: yet methinks the King of Prussia believes so, for he has marched an army to the Lippe, which they say is very much in the way to Hanover.

You tell me how dear you pay at your theatres. I will tell you how cheap we buy pictures. Sir Watkin Williams gave six hundred and fifty pounds last week for a landscape of Nicolo Poussin; and Lord Chesterfield four hundred guineas for another, which somebody was so good as to paint a few months ago for Claude Lorraine. Books, prints, coins, do not lose their rank in proportion. I am every day tempted to make an auction; what do you think all *your* presents

would sell for? They would make me a Crœsus, but I think them invaluable.

The physicians have fancied my poor nephew cured; but yesterday he wrote a letter that proved the very reverse. For my own part I am of the desponding side. It would not be proper for *me* to write to his mother; but I think, if she is at Florence, you might from yourself break a hint of his situation to her. I am grieved that she is not in England.

We have none but Indian politics. The Government is to lend the Company fourteen hundred thousand pounds, and to have great share in the direction. I am one that believe the Indies will leave us stranded, as the South Sea did.

A winter without politics is errant summer; and accordingly my letters are forced to be laconic. The fund, you know, is inexhaustible, but I cannot supply you with current cash. Even our Maccaronis entertain the town with nothing but new dresses and the size of their nosegays. They have lost all their money and exhausted their credit, and can no longer game for twenty thousand pounds a-night. Everything degenerates. Adieu!

P.S. I saw last night, at the Duchess of Gloucester's, a Lady Hesketh, who asked most kindly after you, and desired me to mention her to you.

## LETTER CCV.

Arlington Street, April 27, 1773.

LAST post carried you a war between us and France: this mail will bring you peace again. Guicciardini himself would have difficulty to make a long history of such a transaction. Last Wednesday, fifteen ships of the line were ordered to be equipped for the Mediterranean, for a French fleet was sailing thither from Toulon, and a Spanish one was ready at Carthagena, and the Russian squadron was their object. We were to devour both the former, as soon as they had swallowed the latter. Sir Charles Saunders, who loves no dish like a French ship, was begged to fall to; and the Stocks, who are subject to a panic, fell away to a skeleton: but France, ten times more afraid still of our *puissance*, has begged the Stocks to pluck up their spirits, and swears upon her honour not a ship of hers shall sail. Ours, being so formidable, will, I suppose, be towed over land to Warsaw, and restore the Polish Constitution and their King to his full rights—how frightened the King of Prussia must be!

The House of Commons, I assure you, has no share in scattering these terrors. Its thunders are a joke, and even affect to joke in their turn, instead of menacing. There was to be a call of the House yesterday: the Speaker ordered the Sheriffs to summon their members. The Sheriffs of Middlesex, *sans cérémonie*, summoned Wilkes, instead of Lutterel. Such flagrant contempt has not been noticed!

Balls and masquerades supply the place of politics. France, to be sure, dreads the expensive spirit of our nabobs and Maccaronis, and a little, our weavers, who are all starving, and would have crowded aboard the fleet.

I am very sorry your gout hangs so long upon you. Mine is quite gone, though not its consequences. I walk very poorly, but I am not young enough or strong enough to recover entirely: every fit will leave its mark. I submit to my lot with patience. My portion has, in general, been very happy, and I must not repine if pain dashes the conclusion. Adieu!

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## LETTER CCVI.

Arlington Street, May 29, 1773.

THE Duchess of Gloucester was delivered of a Princess *this* evening; so even their holidays are taken from the Stuarts. The marriages of the two royal Dukes, at the request of his Highness of Gloucester, have been authenticated this week. The King sent the Archbishop, the Chancellor, and the Bishop of London, this day se'nnight, to examine the proofs, and report them with their opinions. They declared themselves fully satisfied with the validity of both marriages, made their report in full council before the King last Wednesday, and the depositions were entered in the council-books.

You will be surprised after this account, that the goodnatured part of the Duchess's sex has opened its

triple mouths to question the legality of the Duke of Gloucester's marriage, because there were no witnesses. The law of England requires none. The declaration of the parties is sufficient. The Duke, on his death-bed, as he believed, at Florence, declared it to the Colonels Rainsford and Heywood,* who have taken their oaths of it, and the Duchess had owned it to the Bishop of Exeter,† which he has attested in like manner—but envy is no lawyer. The Duke was advised to be married again with the King's consent, but he had too much sense to take such silly council, though the King would have allowed it. The Duke, however, submitted to the King's pleasure, if it should be thought necessary, though fully satisfied himself with the validity. The King sent him word by the Archbishop, that as his Royal Highness was satisfied, and as his Majesty had heard no objection to the validity, he did not think any farther steps necessary. In fact, the noise of those who repine at the Duchess's exaltation is a proof that they are convinced her marriage is indissoluble.

I told you the attack on Lord Clive was begun: oh! he is as white as snow. He has owned all, and Machiavel would be the first to acquit him—for he has pleaded supreme policy as his motive. The House of Commons have been of Machiavel's opinion. The censure was rejected, and even a vote of applause passed. Cortez and his captains were not more spotless heroes.

* Grooms of the Bedchamber to the Duke.

† Frederic Koppel, Bishop of Exeter, was married to the Duchess's elder sister.

The East-India Company have broke off the treaty with Government, but are to be forced into submission.

Your neighbour the Pope has lost a good friend, the Duchess of Norfolk.* The old Duke is eighty-nine; the next heir, drunken and mad. His son a doubtful Catholic.† Then come two zealous branches; and then Lord Carlisle.‡

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## LETTER CCVII.

Arlington Street, June 15, 1773.

My Lady Orford has employed great art and pains, after a study of six weeks, to write a letter without any meaning, which, with very ordinary talent, might have been written in half an hour. In order to guard every outwork of interest and cunning, she has left the *heart* of the place naked. Well! since she has no feeling for her son, and since she so much suspects my brother and me, who have acted in the fairest and most respectful manner, she teaches us to be cautious on our side. You may hint, if you will be so good, that her ladyship's letter was so indefinite, and betrayed so little confidence in Sir Edward and me, that you conclude, from the dryness and dissatisfaction of my answer, I understood it as a rebuke to my officiousness, and that, finding our zeal received so coldly,

* Mary Blount, wife of Edward Duke of Norfolk.

† He did afterwards turn Protestant.

‡ Query, if the branch of Suffolk does not precede that of Carlisle?

we should not trouble her ladyship any further; that it is *her* son, not ours; that we have neither authority nor interest to meddle in his affairs. All we can do is to watch over my lord's person, and to take care that every attention of humanity and tenderness be paid to him, and that his unfortunate life may be made as comfortable as possible.

Do not wonder I can tell you little news: could you know the unceasing fatigue and perplexities I have lately gone through, you would wonder that I can find time to execute all my business, or for repose; much less can I attend to the affairs of others.

All I do know is, that the Parliament is still sitting, and will sit a fortnight longer, on Indian affairs. Lord North gets through his regulations, though with many *desagrémens*. The world has expected that he would retire: I hope he will not: he is an honest and a moderate man. On Friday Sir W. Meredith and Charles Fox drove Lord Clive out of the House, by apostrophes, like "Quousque, Catilina?"* and Charles's was admired as much as Tully's: yet Charles's fortune is as desperate as Catiline's, though he is not in Opposition.

All the world are preparing for Portsmouth; whither the King is going to see the fleet. I sigh after my own Thames, and its barges; and the more, as I can walk much better than I expected I ever should: I will not tell you how little that is; but I am content without running races, as our Maccaronis do every Sunday evening in Kensington Garden, to the high

* Beginning of one of Cicero's orations against Catiline.

amusement and contempt of the mob; and yet the mob will be ambitious of being fashionable, and will run races too. Indeed, indeed, were not the Constitution, the boasted Constitution of England, a dead letter, it ought to take out a commission of lunacy against all its members. Adieu!

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## LETTER CCVIII.

Strawberry Hill, July 13, 1773.

I HAVE delayed writing to you from day to day, my dear sir, that I might be able at last to say something precisely to you about my poor nephew and myself, with regard to his affairs, chiefly for the information of his mother, who has not allured me to write herself. Her son has had a terrible relapse. Dr. Jebbe reckons this favourable, as opposite to idiotism, into which he seemed sinking.

But I will trouble you with no more details, though my head and my heart are full of them. They have jostled out every other idea, and I fear will occupy the rest of my life, for the vanity of restoring my family engrosses me. My father, excellent and wise as he was, ruined it by pushing this vanity too far. It will be mine to try to repair the havoc of three generations; and this I have had the confidence to call *duty*. But it would please my father, and that thought will be my reward; or I shall cease from this labour and

all other thoughts in that small spot that puts an end to vain-glory!

When my mind reposes a little, I smile at myself. I intended to trifle out the remnant of my days; and lo! they are invaded by lawyers, stewards, physicians, and jockeys! Yes; this whole week past I have been negotiating a sale of race-horses at Newmarket, and, to the honour of my transactions, the sale has turned out greatly. My Gothic ancestors are forgotten; I am got upon the turf. I give orders about game, dispark Houghton, have plans of farming, vend colts, fillies, bullocks, and sheep, and have not yet confounded terms, nor ordered pointers to be turned to grass. I read the part of the newspapers I used to skip, and peruse the lists of sweepstakes: not the articles of intelligence, nor the relations of the shows at Portsmouth for the King, or at Oxford for the Viceroy North.* I must leave Europe and its Kings and Queens to you; we do not talk of such folks at the Inns of Court. I sold *Stoic*† for five hundred guineas: I shall never get five pence by the Monarchs of the Empire, and therefore we jockeys of the Temple, and we lawyers of Newmarket, hold them to be very insignificant individuals. The only political point that touches me at present is what does occasion much noise and trouble,—the new Act that decries guineas under weight. Though I have refused to receive a

* Frederic Lord North, Prime Minister, and Chancellor of Oxford.

† Name of a race-horse.

guinea myself of Lord Orford's income, yet I must see it all paid into my Lady's banker's hands, and I am now in a fright lest the purchase-money of the racers should be made in light coin,—not from suspicion of such *honourable* men, but from their inattention to money. .

They say the Bank is to issue five-pound notes: at present all trade is at a stop, and the confusion is extreme. Yea, verily, the villany and iniquities of the age are bringing things rapidly to a crisis! Ireland is drained, and has not a shilling. The explosion of the Scotch banks has reduced them almost as low, and sunk their flourishing manufactures to low-water ebb. The Maccaronis are at their *ne plus ultra:* Charles Fox is already so like Julius Cæsar, that he owes an hundred thousand pounds. Lord Carlisle pays fifteen hundred, and Mr. Crew twelve hundred a-year for him—literally for him, being bound for him, while he, as like Brutus as Cæsar, is indifferent about such paltry counters: one must talk of Clodius when one has no Scipio. Yet, if the merit of some historian does not interest posterity by the beauty of his narration, this age will be as little known as the annals of the Byzantine Empire, marked only by vices and follies. What is England now?—A sink of Indian wealth, filled by nabobs and emptied by Maccaronis! A senate, sold, and despised! A country overrun by horse-races! A gaming, robbing, wrangling, railing nation, without principles, genius, character, or allies; the overgrown shadow of what it was! Lord bless me! I run on like a political

barber. I must go back to my shop. I shall let farms well, if I attend to the state of the nation! What's Hecuba to me? Don't read the end of my letter to the Countess; she will think I am as mad as her son.

P.S. St. John Donatello comes down to-morrow to occupy his niche in my new chapel in the garden. With Houghton before my eyes, I am indulging myself in making this place delightful.

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## LETTER CCIX.

Strawberry Hill, September 2, 1773.

You have been as kind and zealous in my cause as I expected, my dear sir; though to little purpose. Lady Orford is only sincere when she avows her insensibility for her son; or rather her resolution of caring for nothing but herself. The applications made to her have persuaded her that I am eager to have the management of her son's affairs, and consequently she thinks it would be for my interest. Now, it happens that nothing would give me so much joy as to be dispensed with from the undertaking. I engaged, because I thought it indecent to decline, when nobody else would submit to the labour, danger, and expense.

You would not wonder that I am provoked, my dear sir, if you knew what I had just suffered, when I met with this unworthy treatment. How can I describe the devastation I found? A new debt, contracted by Lord Orford, of above 40,000*l.* added to

those of his grandfather and father! The estate overwhelmed by mortgages, the livings sold, the glorious house dilapidated, and open in many parts to the weather; the garden destroyed by horses, the park half unpaled, and overgrown with nettles and brambles; a crew of plunderers quartered on all parts, and the house and park mortgaged to my Lady Orford; so that if my lord were to die, my brother would have an empty title, with no estate to come to, and no house to live in. This is the splendid reversion which her ladyship thinks I am reserving for myself! Madness and thieves have anticipated my harvest, and I may glean if I please after the prodigal son, his led captains, grooms, horses, dogs, jockeys, mortgages and creditors! That is, when I have driven the money-changers out of the temple, I may cleanse it for her ladyship, and enrich myself by selling their joint-stools.

You say I attend to no politics—it is most true, and you will not wonder. At present I believe there are none in action, at least I know none, nor even news. Their Highnesses of Cumberland, I believe, are not yet sailed. You will have time enough to ask instructions, especially if it is true that they intend a long residence at Milan.

Lord Lyttelton is dead. His worthy son has added so much to his mass of character by histories too opprobrious to be entertaining, that even this age has the grace to shun him; but then he is neither a monarch nor a nabob.

The vacant green riband will certainly not bring

home Lord Cowper. It is given to Lord Northington. When I want one of any hue, I will not make interest through the Great Duke. The Pope's policy in tormenting the Jesuits, when he wants to save them, passes my understanding—at least it is not the daring style of roguery in vogue.

Adieu! I am not in a pleasing temper; but fortune and spirits generally remove my greatest difficulties, and I will not distrust such old friends.

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## LETTER CCX.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1773.

I HAVE had another letter from you, with the total demolition of the Jesuits. A series of foolish Kings had established them: one foolish King* has put a stop to the mischief. An hundred wise Popes had supported them: one wise Pope† could not save them. This proves that worldly wisdom or folly are pretty indifferent. Times make men, not men times. Well! but here is a large vacuum in the mass of folly,—what will replace it? I ask, upon a maxim of mine, *that it is idle to cure men of a folly, unless one could cure them of being foolish.* Some new grievance will succeed to the Jesuits. Mankind will not be cheated, or tyrannized the less, because a certain black habit is abolished. There are still ermine and scarlet coats left. St. Ignatius is no more, but St. Frederic of

* Charles III. of Spain. † Benedict XIV.

Prussia, St. Catharine of Muscovy, are still red-lettered in respective rubrics. It is no matter whether disciples of enormous incendiaries wear beads or bayonets. Mankind, that hunts wolves, admires usurpers; and, to the disgrace of talents, Voltaire satirises Jesuits, and hymns the ravagers of Poland. I should like to know for how many paltry rubles and florins he has prostituted his incense and character,—for the florins, I will trust the King of Prussia for half of them being of base metal.* Gray could not hear Voltaire's name with patience, though nobody admired his genius more; but he thought him so vile, that for the last years of his life he would read nothing he wrote. Well! but one must read him! Is there another author left in Europe who one wishes should write? Adieu!

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## LETTER CCXI.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 4, 1773.

THE Court† that is on the road to Milan, began their journey with ugly omens. They went two nights to the play at Calais. Next morning a deputation of players went with a compliment, and to be paid. They received only three guineas. In revenge they despatched a dirty candle-snuffer with a bouquet for the Princess. He was received as he deserved, *à coups de baton.* Not content, a third messenger fol-

* He adulterated the coin in which we paid our subsidy to him.

† The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland.

lowed to St. Omer to know if really no more than three guineas was given, the company suspecting that their comrades had pocketed part of the gratuity. The French Government have imprisoned the last ambassador, and banished the *dramatis personæ*. This is very proper; but methinks we are seldom lucky when we are transplanted.

This is not much known here. All tongues are busy with her Grace of Kingston; the Duke is dead, and has given her his whole landed estate for her life, and his personal for ever: but the quintessence of the history is, that, to be secure of the wealth, she has avowed how little claim she had to it, being intituled in the will, "My dearest wife Elizabeth Duchess of Kingston, *alias* Elizabeth Chudleigh, *alias* Elizabeth Hervey." Did you ever hear of a Duchess described in a will as a street-walker is indicted at the Old Bailey? Perhaps the house of Hervey does not make a much brighter figure in the narrative.

There is not a syllable of other news. The Parliament is not to meet till after Christmas. Wilkes and all the lately popular ringleaders of the City are squabbling who shall be Lord Mayor. At Court they are struggling who shall have the three vacant garters. I believe nobody else cares who has.

From France I hear that Monsieur d'Aiguillon begins to display the talons he has long been suspected to have. The Comte de Broglie was named to fetch the Comtesse d'Artois. As his family is Piedmontese, instead of receiving her on the confines, he asked leave

to go to Turin to make his court to the King of Sardinia a month before the intended time. Receiving no answer from the Duc d'Aiguillon, Broglie wrote to reproach him. The letter gave offence, and the Duke carried it to the King. It was read in council, and His Majesty and his Minister's Minister wrote himself to the count, took away his new office, and banished him to his own seat, one hundred and twenty miles from Paris. The count is the sort of man to have done just so by anybody else.

My life, which, though always occupied, has in reality been an idle one, is now passed in business. Combating rogues is not the least part of my employment. The vultures stick to the carcase of my nephew's estate, as if they had not been gorged with its flesh. The lawyers press on me with offers of managing; the servants cannot break themselves of pilfering; and my lord's friends set up promises, as if they had left him anything to give. It is strictly true, that, from the instant he was seized, there has been but one universal thought of plundering. I create enemies at every step, and must expect torrents of abuse, because I am determined not to deserve it.

My administration is an epitome of greater scenes; and, happily, I enter upon it at an age when every passion is cooled. I shall be inexcusable if I do anything but right. My father alone was capable of acting on one great plan of honesty from the beginning of his life to the end. He could for ever wage war with knaves and malice, and preserve his temper;

could know men, and yet feel for them; could smile when opposed, and be gentle after triumph. He was steady, without being eager; and successful, without being vain. He forgot the faults of others, and his own merits; and was as incapable of fear as of doing wrong. Oh! how unlike him I am! how passionate, timid, and vain-glorious! How incapable of copying him, even in a diminutive sphere! in short, I have full as much to correct in myself as to control in others; and I must look into my own breast as often as into bills and accounts. Adieu!

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## LETTER CCXII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 28, 1773.

Don't commend me yet, my dear sir; I will be a good man before I die, if it is possible; but at present I am only learning virtues at the expense of all the world. For some time I had wrapped myself up in my indifference and integrity; and hoped the former, like cedar-chips, would preserve the latter, as it lay useless by me in my drawer. The swarms of rogues that my nephew's affairs have let loose upon me, oblige me to produce all my little stock of honesty; and all the service I intend to do myself by my endless fatigue, shall be to make myself better. The possession of one vice, pride, and the want of two more, ambition and self-interest, have preserved me from many faults; but into how many more have I

fallen! The fruit is past; but the soil shall be improved. I do not talk with a lawyer, that, at the same time, I am not looking into him as a glass, and setting my mind into a handsomer attitude. When he gives me advice, I often say, silently, "This I will be sure *not* to follow;" for, if many try to cheat me, some are as zealous to make me defraud *for* my family; which, though more likely to tempt me than if it were for myself, shall not make me swerve from that narrow middle path, that does exist, but is seldom perceptible, especially as we rarely look for it but through spectacles that we take care should not magnify.

Oh, my dear sir, we are wretched and contemptible creatures! Have I not been writing a panegyric here, when I meant a satire on myself, and did not dare to finish it? I am not mercenary, and therefore lash those that are. I pick out a single negative quality, which I happened to be born without, and think that, like charity, it is to cover a multitude of sins! I am a Pharisee, and affect the modest humility of the publican! Well! I give up all pretensions; but I will try to have some positive merit. I never thought of it while I was idle—my life is now a scene of incessant business. I shall never learn my business; but, thank God! virtue is not so intricate as law and farming. My pride,—no, pray let me keep that: if I expel it, seven worse devils will enter in; and I should sell another passion, a very predominant one, the love of liberty. While all the world is selling

the thing, pray let me, if but as a *virtuoso*, preserve the affection, which is already a curiosity, and will soon, I believe, be an unique.

Luckily for you, I have not time to talk any longer about myself, which you see one loves to do, even though it be to rail at one's self: indeed, like Montaigne, one contrives to specify no failings without giving them a foil that makes them look like virtues. For my part, I forswear any good qualities; I am mortified at knowing I have none; or if I have had, and Virtue fathered them, Pride was their mother, and, whoever she laid them to, Hypocrisy was her *galant*. Still, if she be not past child-bearing, her husband shall yet have some lawful issue.

News there is none; and if there were, have I time to hear or remember it? There are scarce three themes. The great one is the Irish absentée tax, which the Ministers first espoused, then tried to avoid, and is now likely to be saddled on them by mismanagement at Dublin. They have got too great a majority there, who will carry it for them in spite of England's and Ireland's teeth too.

Lord Holland is dying, is paying Charles Fox's debts, or most of them, for they amount to one hundred and thirty thousand pounds! ay, ay; and has got a grandson and heir. I thought this child a prophet, who came to foretell the ruin and dispersion of the *Jews*; but while there is a broker or a gamester upon the face of the earth, Charles will not be out of debt. Pray, do your crews of English at Florence emulate

their countrymen? I saw a letter the other day from Aix, which said that a young Englishman there had lost twenty-two thousand pounds at one sitting. Madness and perdition are gone forth! Is it possible that we should not be undone?

I can tell you of two English above the common standard coming to you. The great Indian Verres, or Alexander, if you please, Lord Clive, is one: the other, Lady Mary Coke.* She was much a friend of mine, but a late marriage,† which *she* particularly disapproved, having flattered herself with the hopes of one‡ just a step higher, has a little cooled our friendship. In short, though she is so greatly born, she has a phrenzy for royalty, and will fall in love with, and at the feet of, the great duke and duchess, especially the former, for next to being an empress herself, she adores the Empress-Queen, or did —for perhaps that passion, not being quite reciprocal, may have waned. However, bating every English person's madness, for every English person must have their madness, Lady Mary has a thousand virtues and good qualities. She is noble, generous, high-spirited, undauntable; is most friendly, sincere, affectionate, and above any mean action. She loves attention, and I wish you to pay it, even for my sake, for I would do anything to serve her. I have often tried to laugh her

* Fourth daughter of John Duke of Argyll, and widow of Edward Lord Viscount Coke, only son of Thomas Earl of Leicester.

† Of the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Waldegrave.

‡ She had flattered herself that Edward Duke of York, elder brother of the Duke of Gloucester, would marry her.

out of her weakness; but, as she is very serious, she was so in that, and if all the sovereigns in Europe combined to slight her, she still would put her trust in the next generation of princes. Her heart is excellent, and deserves and would become a crown, and that is the best of all excuses for desiring one. I am glad you will have so little trouble with those* that are nearer.

Thank you a thousand times for your anecdotes of the Jesuits. It is comfortable to see the world ever open its eyes. If it had all Argus's, it would have need to stare with every pair; but I think it was said of them, that some watched while others slept. Just so would the world's, and would say with the sluggard in the Proverbs, "A little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." The Jesuits have many collaterals, besides other monks. Adieu!

P.S. We have just heard that the tax on Irish absentées has been thrown out even at Dublin.

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## LETTER CCXIII.

Arlington Street, December 21, 1773.

It is an age since I have written to you, my dear sir, but I have had nothing to say, and too much to do. Not that my business would have prevented my hearing common events; the calm of the times and the

* The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, then in Italy.

emptiness of the town have given birth to nothing singular; the newspapers are my witnesses, which, though always full of lies, seldom fail to reach the outlines at least of incidents. To talk of the manners of the age, is the occupation of a morose old man. That they augment, I must not say improve, in extravagance, is not the symptom of my growing old, (though I do,) but of our country's growing so—and what is the old age of a country? Is it not its approaching to dotage and caducity? If the definition is true, we grow every day more blind, deaf, tottering, and distempered.

Examples are better than doctrines, especially in a letter, from their brevity. Charles Fox, the type, the archetype of the century, is just *relaxed* by his father from part of his debts. Lord Holland has paid an hundred thousand pounds more for him, and not above half as much remains unpaid. How one should detest Lord Holland if one were a father, when he sets such a precedent before the eyes of younger sons! Nay, elder sons must hate him too: they used to think profusion was to descend only like titles in the right line. My thoughts naturally revert to that right line. My poor nephew, I hope, is sinking into imbecility, but the passage is dreadful.

My business occupies my whole time. I have none for politics, public or private. My health declines, and so do my animal spirits, as I am sensible my letters shew you. My amusements are at an end, for I have no leisure for them; and therefore whatever curiosity intercepts our correspondence, it will be gra-

tified with no entertainment. I am sorry for your sake that it is grown so dull,—I will not say uninteresting, for whatever touches me so nearly is not indifferent to you. When I revive, or the world is more animated, you will know it, for the lifelessness is not all my own: I am apt enough to be infected with the temper of the times, though but a distant spectator; but I will have done accounting for having nothing to say, which the account itself proves. You have seen me a Proteus in temper; you now find that Proteus's decline is like that of the other old folks.

P.S. Andrew Stone* is dead suddenly, who, I remember, made you pay very dearly for the no-protection he gave you.

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## LETTER CCXIV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 30, 1773.

Oh! my dear sir, you need not make any apologies about the lady,† who is so angry with your tribunals, and a little with you. If you have yet received the letter I wrote to you concerning her some time ago, you will have seen that I cannot be surprised at what has happened. It is a very good heart, with a head singularly awry; in short, an extraordinary cha-

* Formerly Secretary to the Duke of Newcastle, afterwards Treasurer to the Princess Dowager of Wales.

† Lady Mary Coke.

racter even in this soil of phenomena. Though a great lady, she has a rage for great personages, and for being one of them herself; and with these pretensions, and profound gravity, has made herself ridiculous at home, and delighted *de promener sa folie par toute l'Europe.* Her perseverance and courage are insurmountable, as she showed in her conduct with her husband* and his father, in which contest she got the better. Her virtue is unimpeachable, her friendship violent, her anger deaf to remonstrances. She has cried for forty people, and quarrelled with four hundred. As her understanding is not so perfect as her good qualities, she is not always in the right, nor is skilful in making a retreat. I endeavoured to joke her out of her heroine-errantry, but it was not well taken. As she does the strangest things upon the most serious consideration, she had no notion that her measures were not prudent and important; and therefore common sense, not delivered as an oracle, only struck her as ludicrous. This offence, and the success of my niece in a step equally indiscreet, has a little cooled our intimacy; but, as I know her intrinsic worth, and value it, I beg you will only smile at her pouting, and assist her as much as you can. She might be happy and respected, but will always be miserable, from the vanity of her views, and her passion for the extraordinary. She idolized the Empress-Queen, who did not correspond

* Lord Coke was half mad. His father and he confined her. She swore the peace against her husband, and the King's Bench ordered her own family to have access to her; soon after which Lord Leicester and Lord Coke consented to her living at Sudbrook, the villa of her mother.

with equal sentiments. The King of Prussia, with more feminine malice, would not indulge her even with a sight of him; her non-reception at Parma is of the same stuff; and I am amazed that the littleness she has seen in so many sovereigns has not cured her of royal admirations. These Solomons delight to sit to a maker of wax-work, and to have their effigies exhibited round Europe, and yet lock themselves up in their closets when a Queen of Sheba comes to stare at their wisdom!

I am glad you are not likely to be embarrassed with our Court-ambulant. How you must dread your countrymen and women, from the highest to the lowest! Such a fund of follies, for which you must seem answerable without any power of control!

Thank you for the Gazette on the gunpowder-plot.* How amazing that the Jesuits should have preserved that paper, after so long warning of their fate! Did they think it a monument that would redound to their honour?

My nephew, after being for nine weeks at the lowest pitch of deplorable frenzy, has suddenly emerged to a strange degree of reason, and has written three letters with more coolness and clearness than he did almost when he was, what was called, in his senses. I am afraid to flatter myself with the thought of this being a recovery; and as much alarmed lest he should avail himself of this interval to deceive his attendants, and do himself some harm.

* The plan of which was found in the Jesuits' College at Rome.

Dec. 31st.

Doctors Battie and Jebbe have confirmed the wonderful recovery of Lord Orford, and though so contradictory to the sentence they had pronounced upon him three weeks ago, have the fairness to own their mistake and surprise. He is in fact come to his senses so much, that they have opened his whole case to him, and told him that they expect he will be quite well if he keeps himself cool and quiet for some time, neither writing letters nor seeing company, which he has promised. Dr. Jebbe is, I think, rather less sanguine than Battie.

Don't imagine that my mind is so occupied with these affairs, that I neglect talking to you of anything else. The times are favourable to indulging one's own reveries. The Parliament is met, but the Opposition is so quiet, that even their general, Lord Rockingham, is not come to town; nor does anybody foresee one hostile debate. The Duke of Richmond alone maintains the war, but in that distant quarter the India-House, where he has given the ministerial forces a great defeat. It is not a season more fruitful of foreign news, unless a cloud in Russia increases to a storm. An impostor * there, who calls himself Peter III. claims the crown for his pretended son, and has beaten the troops sent against him. I shall not wonder if this attempt costs him, and the great Duke himself, their lives: nor shall I be surprised if France or Prussia has conjured up this phantom.

* His name was Pugatschaff.

Methinks I wish Lady Mary had left you. Her disposition will always raise storms, and you may be involved in them as innocently as you have been. I expect to hear of her in some strange fracas at Rome; and as there is another Archduchess at Naples, whatever vision she is disappointed in, will be laid to the implacability of Juno.* For yourself, however, you may be easy, for nobody here sees Lady Mary's disasters in a serious light.

What can I tell you else? The Opera is a kind of Italian news: Miss Davis has great success. I cannot say she charms me. Her knowledge of music seems greater than her taste; or perhaps it is that I do not like the new taste. Milico is jealous of her, and they make something like parties; but operas are not upon the footing now of creating much discord. They are ill attended; and the burlettas are so bad, and the dancers so execrable, that the managers are afraid of not being able to go on. What shall I tell you has succeeded to politics and pleasures? nothing. Nothing has beaten out everything. The Maccaronis, amongst whom exists the only symptom of vivacity, are all undone; and can distinguish themselves by insensibility alone. They neither feel for their families nor themselves. How long this general lethargy will last I do not know: I remember when it would have grieved me. Adieu!

* The Empress-Queen.

## LETTER CCXV.

Feb. 2, 1774.

I KNOW little of public affairs, nor trouble myself with them but as news: and the only article in my letters which could excite particular curiosity, is very rarely there, and of which I believe *I* know less than anybody. I never was a favorite in a certain place,* and am now particularly ill there for having spoken my mind with more freedom than was welcome; but I shall die with the best legacy my father left me, his *Fari quæ sentiat*—an impertinent motto, when the *fari* is unnecessary.

Your Scotch Princess,† I doubt, is really mad. Does not she put you in mind of your friend Lord Fane,‡ who kept his bed six weeks, because the Duke of Newcastle, in one of his letters, forgot to sign himself your *very* humble servant as usual, and only put your humble servant? These follies would have done very well, when folks fancied *their* stars did everything, and had good and bad demons; but *toute* demon as the Empress-Queen is, and womanish too, I don't believe that, like Juno, she persecutes the pious Æneas in every voyage and peregrination. Then, what an impertinent quarrel that with Lord Huntingdon!§ One sees indeed how

* Gloucester House. † Lady Mary Coke.

‡ Charles, last Viscount Fane, Minister at Florence.

§ Francis Earl of Huntingdon. Lady Mary Coke quarrelled with him for waiting on the Duchess of Cumberland in Italy. Lady Mary Coke tried to persuade people that she had been contracted to the Duke of York, and signed her letters, "Marye," part of the *y* signifying *c* or not, as was necessary.

peevish and persecuting her ladyship would be, if she were Empress or Queen; but it is more ridiculous to proscribe Princes and Princesses, when one is nobody one's self. When the Sophi of Persia has dined, a herald gives leave to all other monarchs to go to dinner: but if a merchant's widow at Ispahan was to give the same permission to her Sovereign, she would be shut up in a madhouse, though she were to insist she had been married to Kouli Khan. I really wish you were well rid of her: cannot you persuade her to go to Rome, where there is a mock court that has nothing better to do than to quarrel about a mock etiquette?

We have no news public or private; but there is an ostrich-egg laid in America, where the Bostonians have canted three hundred chests of tea into the ocean, for they will not drink tea with our Parliament. My understanding is so narrow, and was confined so long to the little meridian of England, that at this late hour of life it cannot extend itself to such huge objects as East and West Indies, though everybody else is acquainted with those continents as well as with the map of Great Britain. Lord Chatham talked of conquering America in Germany; I believe England will be conquered some day or other in New England or Bengal. I think I have heard of such a form in law, as such an one of the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in Asia: St. Martin's parish literally reaches now to the other end of the globe, and we may be undone a twelvemonth before we hear a word of the matter—which is not convenient, and a little drawback on being masters of do-

minions a thousand times bigger than ourselves. Well! I suppose, some time or other, some learned Jesuit Needham will find out that Indostan was peopled by a colony from Cripplegate or St. Mary Axe, which will compensate for a thousand misfortunes.

You see, my dear sir, I forget my troubles the moment they are at an end. Every year's events are stale by the next. One's cares, once at an end, are but old accidents, and to be flung by, like an old almanac. Politicians live by the future; I care only about the present; and the present being very calm, is worth enjoying. Adieu!

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LETTER CCXVI.

Arlington Street, Feb. 23, 1774.

I HAVE taken care not to be too sanguine about the continuation of my nephew's recovery. I have convinced him that I can greatly raise his estate, and he has sent for me to go with him to Houghton. I shall add this codicil to all I have done, and then shall desire to depart in peace. I again see that my family might be saved; but this is a vision which the first warm weather may disperse! And though visions are amusing, I know their texture too well to sigh at their evanition. With what joy I went to Strawberry Hill the other day alone, where I had not been in two months! How my pictures and books and I embraced after so long a separation! What a knave or fool must Charles V. have been to repent of having

done with knaves and fools! I have reigned eight months, and have had the gout as he had, but know a little better than he did how to value health and liberty. But, though so much wiser than Charles V. I have not quite the sagacity of Solomon, who pronounced everything vanity and vexation of spirit. I have finished my temple, and enjoy it. I delight in my trees and shrubs, though I don't know why some are tall, and some short; and learned doctors divert me, though they cannot solve my doubts. Our Sanhedrim entertained me last week, as I am no longer a member. They were grievously affronted in the person of their prolocutor; and, no doubt, by the instigation of the wicked one—at least it is certain that the agents were *devils*. In short, the press, which exceeds even the Day of Judgement, for it brings to light everybody's faults, and a good deal more, fell upon the Speaker of the House of Commons: he complained: the printer was taken up, and accused the Reverend Parson Horne as the author. The House concluded that the divine would shelter himself in the City, and that the magistrates there would protect him—no such thing; he came to the bar, acted respect, denied the charge—nay, artfully reduced them to this dilemma: Was the printer's deposition the accusation or the evidence? whichever it was, the counterpart would be wanted. The janissaries of the law, who can tie knots more easily than loosen them, were at a nonplus, though they said a great deal. Horne burst out into a laugh.

They were forced to vote they would get more evidence; and sent for the printer's devils, who appeared the next day, but still to no purpose. None of them knew a syllable, as they hoped to be saved, of Horne being the author. Well! what to do? Why, nothing. Horne was dismissed, and the printer remains in custody. The majesty of the Senate is a little singed.

Well; but I must do justice: the press has done some justice. There is just published a very good dialogue between three persons of some note—namely, the partitioners of Poland. There is a great deal of wit and just satire in this piece; but though the press can pass sentence, I doubt it cannot see it executed. I do not know but part of it may be put in force. The rebellion in Russia still exists, which looks a little serious. How the Poles must pray that it may prosper! The King of Prussia is so thorough-paced a villain, that I should not be surprised if he had set it on foot. I am sure he will support it, if he can see his interest in it. How happy would it be to have those three monsters punished by each other!

I am heartily glad you are rid of the posthumous Duchess, who thinks herself the object at which all the darts of one of those furies are aimed. She is got to Turin, and will be at home in about two months. Seriously, I apprehend that she is literally mad. Her late visions pass pride and folly. The world here is exceedingly disposed to laugh at her; and by a letter

that is already come from her to Princess Amelia, she does not at all mean to keep her imaginary persecutions secret. Indeed, indeed, my dear sir, I have long told you that we are all mad, and everything one hears proves it. Nay, don't you find every English man or woman who arrives at Florence, out of their senses? I am persuaded that if you were not discretion itself, your letters would be as full of extravagant events as mine are. What think you of that pompous piece of effrontery and imposture, the Duchess of Kingston? Is there common sense in her ostentation and grief, and train of black crape and band of music? I beg you would not be silent on that chapter; it is as comic a scene as that of the Countess Trifaldine in Don Quixote; and though she is the high and mighty Princess, at least she does not yet pretend to be a royal one.

I have had mighty civil despatches from my sister-in-law. She desires the continuation of our correspondence, which I shall now and then obey. I may be obliged to renew it; and, therefore, it is best to keep it up. I have no resentment to her. I wish to keep her and her son on good terms. I have done all I can to persuade him to write to her, and he promises it. Adieu!

P.S.—24th. The famous Charles Fox was this morning turned out of his place of First Lord of the Treasury for great flippancies in the House towards Lord North. His parts will now have a full opportunity of showing whether they can balance his character, or

whether patriotism can whitewash it. The Queen was brought to bed this evening of another prince.

Lady Bute desires me to tell you that Mrs. Anne Pitt is going to Pisa, and that I would recommend her to you. I should do that on my own account, as I am very intimate with her. You know she is Lord Chatham's sister, as well as his very image; but you must take care not to make your court to her on that head, as they are no dear friends. She has excellent parts, a great deal of wit, and not so sweet a temper as to contradict the likeness of her features. She has at times been absolutely *English*,* but not in the present style of the fashion, and has much too good sense to exhibit any extraordinary scenes. She is extremely well-bred, and knows the world perfectly. In short, she will be much pleased with your attentions, and will please you in a very different way from the generality of our exports. I dread sending you any body that I have not known long, and some that I do; but there is no danger from Mrs. Pitt, who has always lived in the great world, and is not of an age to play the fool—especially on a small theatre. She has not succeeded so well as she intended on a very large one;† but you may depend upon it, Tuscany will not tempt her. I will not answer but she may take liberties with *some*‡ that have been

* Out of her senses. She died so some years after.

† She was Privy Purse to the Princess Dowager, over whom she had expected much influence, but meddling too much, was disgraced.

‡ Duchess of Cumberland.

tempted by *great dutchies;* but you will have the prudence not to seem to hear what it is better not to answer.

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## LETTER CCXVII.

Arlington Street, March 28, 1774.

I HAVE just gone through a fortnight's experience of most of my nephew's characteristics. I have been with him at Houghton, and am returned full of sorrow, convinced, on one hand, that if he remains in what are called his senses, his conduct will not be more reasonable than formerly; and, on the other, expecting a relapse.

Your correspondent at Turin* has found so flattering a reception at that Court, that it has smoothed all the loyalty of her brow, and suspended hostilities against Vienna so far, that she has proclaimed an armistice, and sent orders to her Ministers at home to observe a strict silence on her former despatches. I am glad you will be relieved from all our wandering Courts, except her Grace of Kingston's, which is so contemptible, that, were I in your place, I should be extremely determined to let it give me no trouble.

We are in profound tranquillity here. Even America gives us no pain—at least it makes little sensation, for the Opposition have not taken up the cause; in the first place, because the Opposition is very feeble; and, secondly, because it has a great mind to be less;

* Lady Mary Coke.

that is, they are, many of the few, endeavouring to wriggle into Court by different doors. The general tone against the Bostonians is threats. It remains to be seen whether America will be as pliant as we say they must be. I don't pretend to guess, for I seldom guess right; but we could even afford to lose America. Every day gives us more East Indies. Advice has just come that we have taken Tanjore, and a General Smith has got 150,000*l.* for his own share. Spaniards are forced to dig in mines before they are the better for the gold of Potosi; we have nothing to do but to break a truce, and plunder a city, and we find the pretty metal ready coined and brilliants ready cut and mounted. Nay, don't frown; depredation is authorized by act of Parliament, at least by the vote of the House of Commons that acquitted and applauded Lord Clive. How much more just would that sentence of a barbarian ambassador be, if applied to our Parliament than to the Senate of Rome, that he thought he saw an assembly of kings: we sanctify such violences and iniquities, that one should think the House of Commons were composed of three hundred and sixty-five Empresses and Kings of Prussia.

The Duke of Devonshire marries Lady Georgiana Spenser; she is a lovely girl, natural, and full of grace; he, the first match in England. Your old friend, Lord Pelham, is made Justice in Eyre. There are some other promotions of no moment to you, that you will read in the newspapers.

I don't know what to do with the letter you sent me. I have sent a servant all round the town and to the Opera House, but can get no tidings of a Scultore Capezzuoli; you must send me a direction, or I shall never find him. Do his correspondents think that London would stand in the palm of one's hand, like Florence?

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## LETTER CCXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, May 1, 1774.

THE period of time, rather than anything I have to say, brings you my letter. Political events are so much the materials of a distant correspondence, that I don't know how ours would have crept on for so many years, if the last thirty had been as barren as the present one. There is indeed a great business in agitation, and has been for some time; but, without the thorough-bass of Opposition, it makes no echo out of Parliament. Its parliamentary name is *Regulations for Boston.* Its essence, the question of sovereignty over America. Shall I tell you in one word my opinion? If the Bostonians resist, the dispute will possibly be determined in favour of the Crown by force. If they temporize or submit, waiting for a more favourable moment, and preparing for it, the wound, skinned over, will break out hereafter with more violence—not that I lay any stress on my own conjectures. People collect their guesses from what they have read, heard,

or seen; but times are unlike; and a single man * can sometimes give a new colour to an age.

Would not one think that people die or marry only out of opposition too? There is not anything more new in private than in public life. One would think the summer began two months sooner than it used to do; yet the Parliament will probably sit late, in expectation of hearing how the rigour exercised on the Bostonians is received by them and the other colonies.

Lady Mary Coke is not yet arrived, nor was even got to Paris; at least, a letter I received thence yesterday does not mention her. She is expected at home some time in this month.

I have not yet been able to discover Cappezzuoli the sculptor, for whom you sent me a letter long ago. I have inquired at every statuary's in town to no purpose. Mr. Chute's servant, Martelli, is now upon the hunt for him; but his correspondent ought to know that London is a little bigger than Florence. It was directed to Capezzuoli, Scultore, à Londrà. One cannot find a needle in such a bottle of streets. London increases every day; I believe there will soon be no other town left in England, for migrations increase as fast as buildings. All the Scotch and Irish that don't come to London go to America. If you ever return, as I devoutly wish, you will find a larger city than Florence, of which you never saw a street; without including half the adjacent villages, which the town has

* This proved the case in Dr. Franklin.

surrounded or joined. Perhaps it will be at last like Palmyra, in the midst of a vast desert!

Next to gaming, which subsides a little from want of materials, the predominant folly is pictures: I beg their pardon for associating them with gaming. Sir George Colbroke, a citizen, and martyr to what is called *speculation*, had his pictures sold by auction last week. A view of Nimeguen, by Cuyp, not large, and which he had bought very dearly for seventy guineas, sold for two hundred and ninety! If they could be sold in proportion, the collection at Houghton would fetch two hundred thousand. A Mr. Pearson, too, who married the Giacomazzi, brought over a few, particularly from Venice. He sold one Guido for two thousand pounds to Mr. Duncombe. The "Doctors" at Houghton, the first picture in England, and equal to any in Italy but Raphael's, cost but a little above six hundred pounds. Well! we are very rich, and very quiet. I hope it will last! Adieu!

P.S. Miss Davies, the Inglesina, is more admired than anything I remember of late years in operas; but though music is so much in fashion, that some of our fine gentlemen learn to sing, it holds no proportion with hazard and Newmarket. The Cuzzoni and Faustina would not be paid higher than a race-horse.

## LETTER CCXIX.

Strawberry Hill, May 15, 1774.

THIS is a great morsel of news, indeed—nay, not that we know actually yet that Louis Quinze is dead; but we conclude so. Lord Stormont's courier arrived on Wednesday, and had left Paris on Sunday night at eleven, when the hiccup was begun. He said he might not be able to write again soon, as all horses would be stopped. Some pretend to say that the King died on Tuesday, others conclude he is recovered—but horses would not be stopped on that account—on the contrary. Many foretell war—not on knowledge. The Dauphin is little known—the first acts of a new King are seldom the expression of his meaning. There is a notion he likes the Chancellor. If Monsieur de Choiseul returns to power, it will want no prophet to announce war. Two of the King's daughters, though they never had the small-pox, attended him, and it is said the Dauphin saw him since the eruption, which was not very prudent. Madame du Barri was retired to the Duc d'Aiguillon's at Ruel. This is all I have heard that I believe. One never attains the last and first accounts of a reign truly, till half a century is past. What is first said is generally the least to be credited. Those reports are coined by vanity of knowing, by credulity, and conjecture. We believed firmly for two days that Sutton the inoculist was at Paris, and that Lord Stormont had been desired to carry him to the King. Sutton was actually in London.

Well! this is an event that will have great consequences in Europe, or in France. Will the new King go to war, or restore the Jesuits? Will the Dauphiness have any weight? Will the Emperor?—Oh! but they say the King of Prussia is dying too. That would make a greater change. The Czarina pretends to have beaten Pugatscheff—but I don't think the story has much the air of truth. A rebel so often beaten, and that still makes a stand, is a new kind of rebel. They are not apt to have so many resources.

The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland have been landed this week. I can believe easily what you tell me of his confidence to Mr. G. The honey-moon was waned to less than a half-moon before he left England.

Pray be very circumspect with your lodger.* There is great art, and no sweet temper. I have received a bushel of thanks for your civilities, which I imputed to your own good nature and good breeding, as you deserve.

My late ward† has fairly washed his hands of me on some very necessary remonstrances on his health and affairs, which I could not in conscience avoid making. I have not had proper returns where I deserved them, if possible, more; but one must do what is right without reward; nor am I of an age to take disappointments to heart. To do right and be at peace is enough; nay, is not doing right being at peace? Kings may die, and men may be mad: can one save them, or cure them? Shall one not enjoy one's own

* Mrs. Anne Pitt. † His nephew the Earl of Orford.

little lot because inevitable events come to pass? Indeed for the loss of their Majesties it is not necessary to preach patience to anybody. The smiles that waitted on their every word are at the service of the successor.

Apropos, the other day the Chapter of Westminster opened the grave of Edward I., and found his body, crown, velvet and tissue perfect. The flesh of his lips and cheeks was sound, and his hands perfect, except that one had lost its nails. There was a gauze on the face which had grown into the grain, and they could not lift it up. His measure was six feet two. They had found in "Rymer," that they were obliged to bestow a new cerecloth on the corpse every year. That poor service was forgotten after two reigns, and curiosity alone recalled it now after five hundred years. The most extraordinary part is, that it should have been kept up even for two reigns. The Church is seldom a more grateful courtier than a Lord of the Bedchamber. If they cry up a benefactor, it is to inculcate imitation of his *largesses*. I pity Kings; they have more false friends than anybody; and those they love most are certainly the falsest, for they have flattered them most. Louis le Bien-aimé was stabbed, and Henry IV., who deserved that title, was murdered. Every action of a King's life is watched and recorded: what private man could stand such a scrutiny? The greater their power the less they can content, for every man measures his wishes by their power, not by his own merit; and, as Louis Quatorze said, "When I

give a place, I make twenty discontented and one ungrateful." Who almost that ever reigned would not be shocked to read his own history ?

The Duke of Cleveland is dead : the greater part of his estate comes to the Duke of Grafton, and I believe either the title of Cleveland or Southampton. The rest of his fortune goes to his nephew, Lord Darlington.

Lord Ilchester* has had a stroke of palsy, and it is not the first. How thick calamities fall on that family ! Lord Holland drags on a wretched life, and Lady Holland is dying of a cancer. Their youngest, and only good son† is just gone with his regiment to America.

Tuesday, 17th.

Well ! the King of France *is* dead ; but nothing farther is yet known. The new King was not to see the ministers for nine days, so to-morrow will be a bustling day in that Court, and of some importance to this ! Adieu !

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## LETTER CXX.

Strawberry Hill, June 8, 1774.

We are still in the dark about Louis XVI., and do not know whether he designs to make war on the old ministers, on us, or on the ladies of pleasure.

* Stephen Fox, first Earl of Ilchester, and elder brother of Henry Lord Holland.

† Gen. Henry Fox, the father of the present Minister to the United States of America.—Ed.

They represent him as covetous, but he has only retrenched some tables at Court, and has remitted a great sum to the people. As the blessings of the latter are more desirable than those of the nobility, I am apt to think they are more prevalent too than the maledictions of the latter.

As yet there seems to be no colours hung out by which one can judge. D'Aiguillon, it is thought, will fall, though he is said to have betrayed* Madame du Barri, and to have prevented her escape. Were I an absolute monarch, which such a man would make one wish one's-self, I would forbid him ever to set his foot in a town where there was a single gentleman, as not fit to breathe where there is one. Old La Vrillière,† another wretch, is likely to fall too, unpitied. I wish the Chancellor ‡ may too, who is a villanous bashaw. Maurepas does not gain ground. No exiles are recalled. Were the Duc de Choiseul to rise again, I could easily tell what would happen. The Mesdames have had the small-pox, and have escaped, which makes one glad after such meritorious behaviour,—meritorious, but which it was cruel not to restrain.

Indeed, we want no foreign war: the scene in America grows serious. We have this week heard that New York has taken as warm a part as Boston against the teas. The House of Commons sits very late every day, though at this season, on a bill for

* This did not prove true.

† Mons. de St. Florentine, Secretary of State, and then Duc de la Vrillière.

‡ Maupeou.

settling Canada; and though it is said the Parliament will rise next week, I should think the prorogation would be very short, till the news from America are better. Lord Chatham has appeared in the House of Lords, but pleased nobody but Lord Temple, with whom he is again strictly united, which you may mention to his sister. This is the sum of public history, at least that I know, who have been very little in town this month.

The Duke of Devonshire and Lady Georgiana Spenser were married on Sunday; and this month Lord Stanley marries Lady Betty Hamilton. He gives her a most splendid entertainment to-morrow at his villa in Surrey, and calls it a *fête champêtre.* It will cost five thousand pounds. Everybody is to go in masquerade, but not in mask. He has bought all the orange-trees round London, and the haycocks, I suppose, are to be made of straw-coloured satin.

Lady Mary Coke is arrived. She has not been false to the Duke of York's bed, but was so frail as to cuckold his vault; for she went down into that at St. Denis with Louis Quatorze, as she did into that at Westminster when the Princess died. Her Grace of Kingston, though a phenomenon, is no original: the purchase of Sixtus Quintus's villa seems to be an imitation of that stroller, Queen Christina.

My chapel is finished, and Donatello's St. John is enshrined in it. In truth, every chamber at Strawberry is enriched with your presents, which are its most valuable ornaments. The Caligula, the Castigli-

one, Bianca Capello, Benvenuto Cellini's casket, the Florentine box. Take notice, I have not an inch of space left, neither in my house nor my gratitude. I have even forgotten some, as the intaglia of an Apollo, and perhaps twenty things more.

I am sorry to tell Mrs. Pitt that her house at Knightsbridge has been led astray, the moment she turned her back: see what it is to live in a bad neighbourhood! *Pittsburgh*, the Temple of Vesta, is as naughty as Villa Kingstoniana; not that Dr. Elliot's pretty wife* has married another husband in his lifetime; but she has eloped with my Lord Valentia, who has another wife, and some half-dozen children. The sages of Doctors' Commons are to be applied to. I am much obliged to Mrs. Pitt for forcing you to tell me you are safe from your verdigrise. It would have been shocking to have heard it, and waited for the post. Her ball she described to you was very like the cloth of a thousand yards, on which were painted all the Kings and Queens in the universe, and which cloth was lapped up in the kernel of a nut. You are very happy in having such company; it will indemnify you for forty dozen of bears and bear-leaders, that you have been endeavouring for these thirty years to tame, and the latter half of which never are licked into form. Adieu!

* Miss Dalrymple, wife of Sir John Elliot, the physician, from whom she was divorced for many adulteries, and became a celebrated courtezan, known by the name of Dolly the Tall. Sir J. Elliot had bought Mrs. Anne Pitt's villa at Knightsbridge, where the Duchess of Kingston and the Duke of Rutland's mistress had villas also.

P.S. I am reading Montaigne's Travels, which have lately been found; there is little in them but the baths and medicines he took, and what he had everywhere for dinner. He was in Italy in 1580, and the only thing that has struck me in the first volume was his seeing Bianca Capello at dinner. He describes her very like your—my picture. She sat above the Duke, and her brother and his wife dined with them, and the Cardinal Ferdinand. Montaigne says that the houses in Italy at that time had no glass windows. His editor, who is a silly fellow, says Pius V. obliged Cosimo the Great to marry * his mistress Camilla Martelli. I never heard this anecdote; is it true? Pray ask Mrs. Pitt if Madame Griffoni, though thirteen years younger, preserves any remains of beauty, like the Duchess of Queensberry. I take my Signora to be full threescore.

11th.

I had forgotten to send my letter to town, and so can answer one I have this instant received from you. I am more sorry for your disappointment in losing your new friend† than surprised. There is a strange oddness, that at times has been more than oddness; in short, I do not know whether I am quite sorry; it is better to have parted in violent friendship than the contrary.

The Duc d'Aiguillon is certainly out of place, and is succeeded by M. de Vergennes, Ambassador at Stockholm, of whom I know nothing; M. de Muy

* Cosimo I. did marry Camilla Martelli. † Mrs. Anne Pitt.

has the *departement de la Guerre.* The young King seems in no hurry. There is a notion that he does not love the English. I don't know where he will find the Minister that does; but if the Queen has influence, and her brother has any over her, we shall not have a war—from thence: I will not answer for Spain.

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## LETTER CCXXI.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1774.

THE month is come round, and I have, besides, a letter of yours to answer; and yet if I were not as regular as a husband or a merchant in paying my just dues, I think I should not perform the function, for I certainly have no natural call to it at present. Nothing in yours requires a response, and I have nothing new to tell you. Yet, if one once breaks in upon punctuality, adieu to it! I will not give out, after a perseverance of three-and-thirty years; and so far I will not resemble a husband.

The whole blood royal of France is recovered from the small-pox. Both Choiseul and Broglio are recalled, and I have some idea that even the old Parliament will be so. The King is adored, and a most beautiful compliment has been paid to him: somebody wrote under the statue of Henri Quartre, *Resurrexit.*

Lord Holland is at last dead, and Lady Holland is at the point of death. His sons would still be in good circumstances, if they were not *his* sons, but he had so

totally spoiled the two eldest, that they would think themselves bigots if they were to have common sense. The prevailing style is not to reform, though Lord Lyttelton pretends to have set the example. Gaming for the last month has exceeded its own outdoings, though the town is very empty. It will be quite so to-morrow, for Newmarket begins, or rather the youth adjourn thither. After that they will have two or three months of repose; but if they are not severely blooded and blistered, there will be no alteration. Their pleasures are no more entertaining to others, than delightful to themselves; one is tired of asking every day, who has won or lost? and even the portentous sums they lose, cease to make impression. One of them has committed a murder, and intends to repeat it. He betted 1500*l.* that a man could live twelve hours under water; hired a desperate fellow, sunk him in a ship, by way of experiment, and both ship and man have not appeared since. Another man and ship are to be tried for their lives, instead of Mr. Blake, the assassin.

Christina, Duchess of Kingston, is arrived, in a great fright, I believe, for the Duke's nephews are going to prove her first marriage, and hope to set the Will aside. It is pity her friendship with the Pope had not begun earlier; he might have given her a dispensation. If she loses her cause, the best thing he can do, will be to give her the veil.

I am sorry all Europe will not furnish me with another paragraph. Africa is, indeed, coming into

fashion. There is just returned a Mr. Bruce, who has lived three years in the Court of Abyssinia, and breakfasted every morning with the Maids of Honour on live oxen. Otaheite and Mr. Banks are quite forgotten; but Mr. Blake,* I suppose, will order a live sheep for supper at Almack's, and ask whom he shall help to a piece of the shoulder. Oh yes; we shall have negro butchers, and French cooks will be laid aside. My Lady Townshend, after the rebellion, said, everybody were so bloodthirsty, that she did not dare to dine abroad, for fear of meeting with a rebel-pye—now one shall be asked to come and eat a bit of raw mutton. In truth, I do think we are ripe for any extravagance. I am not wise enough to wish the world reasonable—I only desire to have follies that are amusing, and am sorry Cervantes laughed chivalry out of fashion. Adieu!

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## LETTER CCXXII.

Arlington Street, Aug. 3, 1774.

I TOLD you in my last that her Grace of Kingston was arrived. Had I written it four-and-twenty hours later, I might have told you she was gone again, with much precipitation, and with none of the pomp of her usual progresses. In short, she had missed her lawyer's letters, which warned her against returning. A prosecution for bigamy was ready to meet her. She

* Who betted on the man's living under water twelve hours.

decamped in the middle of the night; and six hours after, the officers of justice were at her door to seize her. This is but an unheroic catastrophe of her romance; and though she is as thorough a comedian as Sixtus Quintus, it would be a little awkward to take possession of his villa after being burnt in the hand. What will be the issue of the suit and law-suit I cannot tell. As so vast an estate is the prize, the lawyers will probably protract it beyond this century. Her friend the Electress of Saxony said to the Duke of Gloucester, "Poor thing! what could she do; she was so young when she was first married?"

Lady Holland is dead—just three weeks after her Lord. She has cleared all the debts of her two elder sons; the eldest has a large fortune, and Charles a decent beginning of another; though it may not last a-night, if he chooses to make it a codicil to all he has lost, and scorns to be indebted to anything but his own parts for his elevation.

Lord Thomond* is dead too; and though possessed of nearly ten thousand a-year, and fifty thousand in money, nay, though he has long expected to die suddenly, and at the same age with his grandfather, father, and brother, as he has done, he could not bring himself to make a will, and the whole real estate falls to his nephew, Lord Egremont.

These are all the events of this inactive summer;

* Percy Windham O'Brien Earl of Thomond, second son of Sir William Windham, and younger brother of Charles Earl of Egremont.

and I chose this small paper, as abundantly large enough to contain them. Nay, I do not see how I shall reach its third page.

I find that in France, they are persuaded the old Parliament will be restored. The Dukes of Orleans and Chartres are again forbidden the Court for refusing to assist at the *catafalque* of the late King, where they must have saluted the new Parliament: yet this is not thought a disgrace. Monsieur de Boines is removed for a Monsieur Turgot. I see, however, that the old spirit remains at least in one quarter, and that they continue butchering the poor Corsicans. Is it true, that the King of Sardinia is to have that island? How unfortunate it is that little countries should retain a spirit of independence, which they have not strength to preserve; and that great nations, who might throw it off, court the yoke!

4th.

Oh! my dear sir, what a heartfelt pleasure I have had this moment! I have been to Mr. Croft's to see your picture. It brought the tears into my eyes; though thirty years have fattened you, made you florid, I traced every feature, and saw the whole likeness in the character and countenance—yes, there is all your goodness. I admire the art of the painter too; there is harmony in the tone, and though he has given you an Adonis-wig, which we should not think adapted to your age, he has managed it so as to have no juvenile air, but to harmonize in the utmost propriety with the decency of the ministerial compo-

sure. In short, as I did once before, I wanted to seize it for my own—but no! it will go to Linton, and I hope remain there for ages—which would not, I suppose, be its fate at Strawberry; that poor bauble will probably be condemned and pulled to pieces by whomever I shall give it to.* Our living deeds create no gratitude; can we expect our affection expressed in a last Will should make stronger impressions?

Mr. Croft showed me a letter from you on Birmingham covers for dishes. He has written, but received no answer. I told him I would advise you against them. All plated silver wears abominably, and turns to brass, like the age. You would not bear it six months. He told me that your nephew Horace is on the road to you: how glad I am! what joy to embrace dear Gal.'s son! I think I have seen too many bad hearts in the countenance, not to know when I see a good one; yes, yes, you will find Gal. and yourself in your nephew. I am as sure there is goodness in his heart, as I am that there is sense in his head, and quickness in his parts. I was charmed with him last year; and don't fancy it is partiality if you think so too the first minute you see him. Certain characters strike fire from each other.

The King of Prussia has been amazingly gracious to General Conway, and ordered him to attend him to all his reviews. This is most astonishing favour to an

* By the care he took, in his testamentary dispositions, to avoid this dispersion, one may hope he did not, at the time, altogether believe in his own prediction; which, however, was verified within forty years of his death.—Ed.

Englishman. For my part, I am sorry ; I had rather such virtue had been marked by his frown. *There are many Marius's in that Cæsar*, a quotation you will not suspect me of intending for a compliment ! Adieu !

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## LETTER CCXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 2, 1774.

You think I write seldom, my dear sir, but how can I help it ? Not seldomer, I hope, than in other peaceful summers. In vacations of London and Parliament, little happens weighty enough to bear so long a journey. This season has been singularly barren. Perhaps events may thicken, which, prosperous or not, are equally propitious to correspondences. The scene in America, they say, grows very gloomy ; Cæsar* frowns on the Elector of Hanover ; but I know neither Atlantic nor German politics. *You* tell me what the Turks and Russians are to do next, but before I received your letter, I could have told you that they have agreed to do nothing more — which is much about what they have been doing all the war. Well, still one has something to live upon. The King of France has at last spoken out ; both the Chancellor and Terray† are banished, and the old Parliament restored, or to be restored. As little as I care about the revolutions of the great planets, I am mightily

* The Emperor disagreeing with the King on German politics.

† The Abbé du Terry, Comptroller General of the Finances.

pleased with this convulsion. I like old constitutions recovering themselves; and I abhorred the Chancellor, a consummate villain, who would have served Alexander VI. and Cæsar Borgia too, and wished no better than to have restored St. Ignatius and St. Nero. This young King is exceedingly in my good graces; and may gain my whole heart whenever he pleases, if he will but release Madame du Barri, for, though the tool of a vile faction, I would not be angry with a street-walker; nor make no difference between Thais and Fredegonde; between Con. Philips and the Czarina.

By the way, one hears no more of my friend Pugatscheff; yet perhaps he contributed to this peace. It is now part of my plan that the King of France should dethrone that woman, and their Majesties of Prussia and Sweden, and restore Corsica—not to the Genoese, but to themselves. You may think all this a great deal, but it is not a quarter so difficult as conquering one's-self, and relinquishing despotism. It is a greater victory to make happy than miserable; but then what glorious rewards! Think, how contemptible the end of Louis the Well-beloved, how bright the dawn of Louis XVI.! Can any power taste so sweet as this single word on the statue of Henri Quatre, *Resurrexit*? And then, what a blessed retirement the Chancellor's! How he must enjoy himself, when the loss of power is sweetened with the curses of a whole nation, who have not cursed him in vain! My whole heart makes a bonfire on this occasion. What a century, which sees the Jesuits annihilated, and absolute power re-

linquished! I begin to believe in the Millennium, when the just shall reign on earth. I scorn to say a word more, or prophane such a subject with heathen topics. Adieu!

P.S. My affection for your concerns betrays me into a weakness; I cannot help being so irreligious as to tell you, that you are to have a new neighbour, though not very soon; Lord Carlisle is to succeed Mr. Lynch at Turin.

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LETTER CCXXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 6, 1774.

It would be unlike my attention and punctuality, to see so large an event as an irregular dissolution of Parliament, without taking any notice of it to you. It happened last Saturday, six months before its natural death, and without the design being known but the Tuesday before, and that by very few persons. The chief motive is supposed to be the ugly state of North America, and the effects that a cross winter might have on the next elections. Whatever were the causes, the first consequences, as you may guess, were such a ferment in London as is seldom seen at this dead season of the year. Couriers, despatches, post-chaises, post-horses, hurrying every way! Sixty messengers passed through one single turnpike on Friday. The whole island is by this time in equal agitation; but less wine and money will be shed than have been at any such period for these fifty years.

We have a new famous bill, devised by the late Mr. Grenville, that has its first operation now; and what changes it may occasion, nobody can yet foresee. The first symptoms are not favourable to the Court; the great towns are casting off submission, and declaring for popular members. London, Westminster, Middlesex, seem to have no monarch but Wilkes, who is at the same time pushing for the mayoralty of London, with hitherto a majority on the poll. It is strange how this man, like a phœnix, always revives from his embers! America, I doubt, is still more unpromising. There are whispers of their having assembled an armed force, and of earnest supplications arrived for succours of men and ships. A civil war is no trifle; and how we are to suppress or pursue in such a vast region, with a handful of men, I am not an Alexander to guess; and for the fleet, can we put it upon casters and wheel it from Hudson's Bay to Florida? But I am an ignorant soul, and neither pretend to knowledge nor foreknowledge. All I perceive already is, that our Parliaments are subjected to America and India, and must be influenced by their politics; yet I do not believe our senators are more universal than formerly.

It would be quite unfashionable to talk longer of anything but elections; and yet it is the topic on which I never talk or think, especially since *I took up my freedom.** In one light I can speak of them. The whole world has been so good for these six months as to believe my nephew quite in his senses. It was

* His quitting Parliament.

very far from being *my* opinion. You shall judge yourself. Lady Orford had given him power over her boroughs. The moment her agent heard of the dissolution, he sent two expresses, one after the other, to my lord. He has not deigned to send any answer or give any orders, except despatching Mr. Skreene to one of them. Mr. Boone, his candidate for the other, is in bed with the gout; and though there is a clear majority of three voices at one, Mr. Sharpe thinks he will lose both by his improvidence.

In the midst of this combustion, we are in perils by land and water. It has rained for this month without intermission; there is a sea between me and Richmond, and Sunday was se'nnight I was hurried down to Isleworth in the ferry-boat by the violence of the current, and had great difficulty to get to shore. Our roads are so infested by highwaymen, that it is dangerous stirring out almost by day. Lady Hertford was attacked on Hounslow Heath at three in the afternoon. Dr. Eliot was shot at three days ago, without having resisted; and the day before yesterday, we were near losing our Prime Minister, Lord North; the robbers shot at the postilion, and wounded the latter. In short, all the freebooters, that are not in India, have taken to the highway. The Ladies of the Bedchamber dare not go to the Queen at Kew in an evening. The lane between me and the Thames is the only safe road I know at present, for it is up to the middle of the horses in water. Next week I shall not venture to London even at noon, for the Middlesex election is

to be at Brentford, where the two demagogues, Wilkes and Townshend, oppose each other; and at Richmond there is no crossing the river. How strange all this must appear to you Florentines; but you may turn to your Machiavelli and Guicciardini, and have some idea of it. I am the quietest man at present in the whole island; not but I might take some part, if I would. I was in my garden yesterday, seeing my servants lop some trees; my brewer walked in and pressed me to go to Guildhall for the nomination of members for the county. I replied, calmly, "Sir, when I would go no more to my own election, you may be very sure I will go to that of nobody else." My old tune is,

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis, &c.

Adieu!

P.S. Arlington Street, 7th.

I am just come to town, and find your letter, with the notification of Lord Cowper's marriage; I recollect that I ought to be sorry for it, as you will probably lose an old friend. The approaching death of the Pope will be an event of no consequence. That old mummery is near its conclusion, at least as a political object. The history of the latter Popes will be no more read than that of the last Constantinopolitan Emperors. Wilkes is a more conspicuous personage in modern story than the Pontifex Maximus of Rome. The poll for Lord Mayor ended last night; he and his late Mayor had above 1900 votes, and their antagonists not 1500. It is strange that the more he is opposed, the more he succeeds!

I don't know whether Sir W. Duncan's marriage proved Platonic or not; but I cannot believe that a lady of great birth,* and greater pride, quarrels with her family, to marry a Scotch physician for Platonic love, which she might enjoy without marriage. I remember an admirable *bon-mot* of George Selwyn; who said, "How often Lady Mary will repeat, with Macbeth, 'Wake, Duncan, with this knocking—would thou couldst!'"

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LETTER CCXXV.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 22, 1774.

THOUGH I have been writing two letters, of four sides each, one of which I enclose, I must answer your two last, if my fingers will move; and talk to you on the contents of the inclosed.

If the Jesuits have precipitated the Pope's death,† as seems more than probable, they have acted more by the spirit of their order, than by its good sense. Great crimes may raise a growing cause, but seldom retard the fall of a sinking one. This I take to be almost an infallible maxim. Great crimes, too, provoke more than they terrify; and there is no poisoning all that are provoked, and all that are terrified; who alternately provoke and terrify each other, till common danger produces common security. The Bourbon Monarchs will be both angry and frightened, the

* Lady Mary Tufton, sister of the Earl of Thanet.
† Benedict XIV. Ganganelli.

Cardinals frightened. It will be the interest of both not to revive an order that bullies with arsenic in its sleeve. The poisoned host will destroy the Jesuits, as well as the Pope: and perhaps the Church of Rome will fall by a wafer, as it rose by it; for such an edifice will tumble when once the crack is begun.

Our elections are almost over. Wilkes has taken possession of Middlesex without an enemy appearing against him; and, being as puissant a monarch as Henry the Eighth, and as little scrupulous, should, like him, date his acts *From our Palace of Bridewell, in the tenth year of our reign.* He has, however, met with a heroine to stem the tide of his conquests; who, though not of Arc, nor a *pucelle*, is a true *Joan* in spirit, style, and manners. This is her Grace of Northumberland;* who has carried the mob of Westminster from him; sitting daily in the midst of Covent-garden; and will elect her son† and Lord Thomas Clinton,‡ against Wilkes's two candidates, Lord Mahon§ and Lord Mountmorris. She puts me in mind of what Charles the Second said of a foolish preacher, who was very popular in his parish: "I suppose his nonsense suits their nonsense."

Let me sweeten my letter by making you smile. A quaker has been at Versailles; and wanted to see the Comtes de Provence and D'Artois dine in public, but would not submit to pull off his hat. The Princes

* Lady Elizabeth Seymour. † Earl Percy.
‡ Second son of Henry Duke of Newcastle.
§ Only son of Earl Stanhope.

were told of it; and not only admitted him with his beaver on, but made him sit down and dine with them. Was it not very sensible and good-humoured? You and I know one who would not have been so gracious: I do not mean my nephew Lord Cholmondeley.* Adieu! I am tired to death.

P.S. I have seen the Duchess of Beaufort; who sings your praises quite in a tune I like. Her manner is much unpinioned to what it was, though her person remains as stately as ever; and powder is vastly preferable to those brown hairs, of whose preservation she was so fond. I am not so struck with the beauty of Lady Mary† as I was three years ago. Your nephew, Sir Horace, I see, by the papers, is come into Parliament: I am glad of it. Is not he yet arrived at Florence?

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LETTER CCXXVI.

Strawberry Hill, Nov 11, 1774.

I HAVE very little to tell you. Every day may bring us critical news from America, which will give the chief colour to the winter. I am in perfect ignorance of the situation of affairs there. I live quietly here, unconnected with all factions, enjoying the delightful place I have made, and even enjoying my old age, since the gout keeps away. The bitterness of the last fit,

* He means the Duke of Gloucester.

† Lady Mary Somerset, youngest daughter of Charles Noel, Duke of Beaufort. She was afterwards married to the Duke of Rutland.

succeeded by my stewardship, gives a flavour to my tranquillity that, perhaps, I should not taste so much, if I had not lost it for nearly a year and a half. I propose to be little absent hence till after Christmas, a longer stay than I ever made in the country; but what can I see in London that I have not seen fifty times over? There is a new race, indeed, but does it promise to make the times more agreeable? Does the world talk of our orators, poets, or wits? Oh, no! It talks of vast fortunes made, or vast fortunes lost at play! It talks of Wilkes at the top of the wheel, and of Charles Fox at the bottom: all between is a blank.

It is not much better anywhere else. The King of Prussia, the hero of the last war, has only been a pickpocket in Poland. The Austrian and Russian eagles have turned vultures, and preyed on desolated champaigns. The Turkish war ended one don't know how without any signal action. France has been making Parliaments cross over and figure-in, and yet without the scene being at all amusing. For my part, I take Europe to be worn out. When Voltaire dies, we may say, "Good night!" I don't believe this age will be more read than the Byzantine historians.

The bigamist Duchess* is likely to become a real peeress at last. Lord Bristol† has been struck with a palsy that has taken away the use of all his limbs. If he dies, and Augustus should take a fancy to marry again,

* Eliz. Chudleigh, married to the Duke of Kingston, though her husband, Augustus Hervey, was living.

† George William, second Earl of Bristol.

as two or three years ago he had a mind to do, his next brother, the Bishop,* may happen to assist the Duke of Kingston's relations with additional proofs of the first marriage. They now think they shall be able to intercept the receipt of the Duke's estate; but law is a horrid liar, and I never believe a word it says before the decision.

Nov. 14th.

There are advices from America that are said to be extremely bad: I don't know the particulars; but I have never augured well of that dispute! I fear we neither know how to proceed or retreat! I believe this is the case with many individuals, as well as with the public. Within this week we have had two deaths out of the common course. Bradshaw,† a man well known of late, but in a more silent way than for his *fame* to have reached you, shot himself yesterday se'nnight. His beginning was very obscure; when he grew more known, it was not to his honour. He has since been a very active Minister, of the second or third class, and more trusted, perhaps, than some of a higher class. Instead of making a great fortune, he had spent one, and could not go on a week longer. The Duke of Athol is dead as suddenly; drowned certainly; whether delirious from a fever or from some disappointment, is not clear. Two evenings ago Lord Berkeley shot a highwayman; in short, frenzy is at work from

* Frederic Hervey, Bishop of Derry, who became Earl of Bristol after his brothers, George and Augustus.

† Secretary of the Treasury.

top to bottom, and I doubt we shall not be cool till there has been a good deal of blood let. You and I shall, probably, not see the subsiding of the storm, if the humours do boil over; and can a nation be in a high fever without a crisis? I see the patients; I do not see the doctors. Adieu!

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## LETTER CCXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 24, 1774.

I THANK you, my dear sir, for your news of the Conclave and of the Duchess * and her ship-load of plunder. If the captain carries it off, it will be but an episode well suited to the history. I shall like a continuation of both subjects.

As you only say that you mentioned a certain election to the Countess,† I conclude you had not yet received my letter for her. The interlude of Macreth ‡ has given so much offence, that, after having run the gauntlet, he has been persuaded to be modest and give up his seat. I should not say *give*, but sell it. I do not believe that the buyer will be much more creditable; but, happily, I am free from all this disgraceful transaction.

* The Duchess of Kingston.

† Countess Orford, living at Florence.

‡ Robert Macreth. He had been a waiter at White's. Lord Orford, having borrowed money of him, brought him into Parliament for his borough of Castle Rising; and, to excuse it, pretended that his mother, Lady Orford, who knew nothing of it, borrowed the money.

A great event happened two days ago—a political and moral event! the sudden death of that second Kouli Khan, Lord Clive. There was certainly illness in the case; the world thinks more than illness. His constitution was exceedingly broken and disordered, and grown subject to violent pains and convulsions. He came unexpectedly to town last Monday, and they say, ill. On Tuesday his physician gave him a dose of laudanum, which had not the desired effect. On the rest, there are two stories; one, that the physician repeated the dose; the other, that he doubled it himself, contrary to advice. In short, he has terminated at fifty a life of so much glory, reproach, art, wealth, and ostentation! He had just named ten members for the new Parliament.

Next Tuesday that Parliament is to meet—and a deep game it has to play! few Parliaments a greater. The world is in amaze here that no account is arrived from America of the result of their General Congress—if any is come it is very secret; and *that* has no favourable aspect. The combination and spirit there seem to be universal, and is very alarming. I am the humble servant of events, and you know never meddle with prophecy. It would be difficult to descry good omens, be the issue what it will.

The old French Parliament is restored with great *éclat.* Monsieur de Maurepas, author of the revolution, was received one night at the Opera with boundless shouts of applause. It is even said that the mob intended, when the King should go to hold the *lit de*

*justice*, to draw his coach. How singular it would be if Wilkes's case should be copied for a King of France! Do you think Rousseau was in the right, when he said that he could tell what would be the manners of any capital city, from certain given lights? I don't know what he may do on Constantinople and Pekin—but Paris and London! I don't believe Voltaire likes these changes. I have seen nothing of his writing for many months; not even on the poisoning Jesuits.* For our part, I repeat it, we shall contribute nothing to the *Histoire des Mœurs*, not for want of materials, but for want of writers. We have comedies without novelty, gross satires without stings, metaphysical eloquence, and antiquarians that discover nothing.

Bœotûm in crasso jurares aere natos!

Don't tell me I am grown old and peevish and supercilious—name the geniuses of 1774, and I submit. The next Augustan age will dawn on the other side of the Atlantic. There will, perhaps, be a Thucydides at Boston, a Xenophon at New York, and, in time, a Virgil at Mexico, and a Newton at Peru. At last, some curious traveller from Lima will visit England and give a description of the ruins of St. Paul's, like the editions of Balbec and Palmyra; but am I not prophesying, contrary to my consummate prudence, and casting horoscopes of empires like Rousseau? Yes; well, I will go and dream of my visions.

P.S. 29th.

The Ecclesiastical Court, I hear, has decided, and

* They poisoned Pope Ganganelli.

will pronounce, that the person commonly called Duchess of Kingston, is a certain Mrs. Hervey. The new Lord Holland* is dead — stay; you must not believe a word I tell you. Truth in this climate won't keep sweet four-and-twenty hours. Lord Bristol says, nothing can be done against the Duchess of Kingston.

The Parliament opened just now — they say the speech talks of the *rebellion* of the Province of Massachusetts; but if *they-say* tells a lie, I wash my hands of it. As your gazetteer, I am obliged to send you all news, true or false. I have believed and unbelieved everything I have heard since I came to town. Lord Clive has died every death in the parish register; at present it is most fashionable to believe he cut his throat. That he is dead, is certain; so is Lord Holland—and so is not the Bishop of Worcester; however, to show you that I am at least as well-informed as greater personages, the bishoprick was on Saturday given to Lord North's brother—so for once the Irishman was in the right, and a pigeon, at least a dove, can be in two places at once.

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## LETTER CCXXVIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 9, 1775.

I WRITE without having anything to say, but what I know you will like better than news. I am quite recovered of the gout, except in the hand I write

* Stephen Fox, second Lord Holland.

with, and which you see cannot be very bad. The bootikins have proved themselves to demonstration. I had the gout in both hands, both feet, both elbows, and one wrist, and yet could walk without a stick in less than a month, and have been abroad twice in less than five weeks. It came in each part as rapidly as it could, and went away so too; and though I had some acute pain, much less in quantity than in any fit these ten years. Now, if less pain, and five weeks instead of five months and a-half, as the last fit was, be not demonstration, there is none in Euclid.

The bootikins do not cure the gout, but if they defer it, lessen it, shorten it, who would not wear them? Why, fine people, younger people, who will not condescend to lie like a mummy; nay, nor anybody else, for the physicians and apothecaries, who began by recommending them, now, finding they are a specific, cry them down—and will be believed, precisely because they lie; they say they weaken; it is false; I can at this moment stamp on the marble hearth with both feet with no more inconvenience than I did at five-and-twenty, which I never saw one other person that could do, who had the gout a twelvemonth before. I do this ten times a-day, to convince people; yet, what is ocular proof against the assertion of a grave face and a tied wig? If weakness were the consequence, who would be weakened so soon as I, who have bones no bigger than a lark's? I want to send you a cargo of bootikins; tell me the shortest

way of conveying them. Your brother is one of the bigoted infidels; can one wonder that the three professions make so many dupes, when pain cannot open the understanding? Sure the Devil's three names of Satan, Beelzebub, and Lucifer, were given to him in his three capacities of priest, physician, and lawyer! It is certainly true that there are apothecaries in London who have given noxious drugs under the name of James's powders, to decry the latter. I did not think there could be a *trade* so bad as a *profession*, till I heard that the fishmongers in town here, fling away great quantities of fish that it may never be cheap. What a wicked monster is a great metropolis!

I rejoice that you have resolved to avow your *nepotism:* it may be a bar to your obtaining the Papacy, but sounds well in this Protestant country, and I am sure will turn out to your mind's satisfaction, though it may be a little interruption to your quiet.

This is a short letter, but I call it an intercalated one. There will probably be enough, and too much to send you soon—but till the Parliament meets, all is suspense! I hope decision will not follow *in haste!* The moment is very big; and if anybody is wise enough to see a quick solution of all the difficulties, they are much more intuitive than my comprehension.

Lord Lincoln* marries my cousin, Lady Frances Conway;† she is a sweet young woman in person,

* Eldest son of Henry Clinton, Duke of Newcastle.

† Fourth daughter of Francis Seymour Conway Earl of Hertford, nephew of Catherine Shorter Lady Walpole, first wife of Sir Robert.

temper, and understanding, and deserves such vast fortune. Adieu!

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LETTER CCXXIX.

Arlington Street, Jan. 25, 1775.

THE Duke of Gloucester is very ill. Had I begun my letter last night, I should have said, extremely ill. It was reported and believed that he was dead; but he slept eight hours last night, and his pulse was better this morning. The physicians, who gave no hopes yesterday, say to-night, that they never saw any mortal symptoms. Be assured they speak as little truth of the past as they know of what is to come. The Duke has been declining this month; and he was ordered to go abroad immediately, but delayed—and now is not able to go. I hope in God he will get strength enough — I wish him abroad for every reason. The other Duke his brother, has erected his standard in opposition, and though the Duke of Gloucester is too wise, I trust, to take such a part, he would be teased to death with the politics of the Lutterels, and had better be out of the way.

The times are indeed very serious. Pacification with America is not the measure adopted. More regiments are ordered thither, and to-morrow a plan, I fear equivalent to a declaration of war, is to be laid before both Houses. They are bold Ministers, methinks, who do not hesitate on a civil war, in

which victory may bring ruin, and disappointment endanger their heads. Lord Chatham has already spoken out: and though his outset [a motion in the Lords last Friday] was neither wise nor successful, he will certainly be popular again with the clamorous side, which no doubt will become the popular side too, for all wars are costly, and consequently grievous. Acquisition alone can make those burthens palatable; and in a war with our own colonies we must afflict instead of acquiring them, and cannot recover them without having undone them. I am still to learn wisdom and experience, if these things are not so.

I thank you much for the opera of the Conclave. It loses greatly of its spirit by my unacquaintance with the *dramatis personæ*. By the duration of the interregnum, I suppose there is a difficulty of choosing between the Crowns and the Jesuits; and the Cardinals more afraid of poison from the latter, than of the menaces of the former. Though old folks are not less ambitious than young, they have greater aversion to arsenic. But seriously, is it not amazing that the Jesuits can still exist, when their last crime* was sufficient to have drawn down vengeance on them, if they had not been proscribed before?

We have no news of ordinary calibre; but perhaps I grow too old to learn the lesser anecdotes of the town. I scarce ever go to public places, and live only with people who have turned the corner of adventures.

* Of poisoning Pope Ganganelli.

Indeed in this country, there is something so singular and so new in most characters, that all the world hears the history of the most remarkable performers. The winter is young yet; I dare to say it will not long be barren.

27th.

The Duke of Gloucester, I hope, is out of danger; I mean for the present. It is a constitution that will always give alarms; it has radical evils, and yet amazing stamina. As to the physicians, I do not mind a syllable they say. On Saturday they were very proud of a discovery—they had now found out his distemper, and it was a new one; he had two shivering fits, and so there was matter forming. This mighty discovery, which only authenticated their former ignorance, proves to be a new blunder. On Tuesday they gave the Duchess no hopes at all, and on Wednesday night they recollected that his Royal Highness had had no mortal symptom—for they have no shivering fit of shame. They now talk of his going abroad in April; I wish it much sooner. In short, I am very impatient, both for his health, and other reasons. He will take the Duchess and his daughters, and go no farther than the south of France. That is an answer to a question* you have not asked. His mind will be more at peace, and he will be free from all who would disturb it for their own ends. The Lutterels are every day, I believe, writing impertinent paragraphs in the newspapers, as if in behalf of the Duke of Gloucester, which

* Whether he will go to Italy.

only tends to incense the King against him, that they may involve him in their own views; but he knows it, and will not be their dupe. Adieu!

P.S. I forgot to tell you that the town of Birmingham has petitioned the Parliament to enforce the American acts, that is, make war; for they have a manufacture of swords and muskets. I believe the Dutch will petition too, for much such a reason!

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LETTER CCXXX.

Arlington Street, Feb. 15, 1775.

You have been made easy long ago, I hope, about my gout, and have restored your good opinion to the bootikins, which reduced it to so short a fit. *They could* not give you an inflammation and swelling; they probably prevented its being worse. It is still more idle when people say they weaken—who was ever *not* weak after the gout? I, who am *naturally* weaker than anybody, recover my feet so much that I can stamp on marble with all my force, which I never saw a gouty person besides able to do. Be assured that the physicians have set about that nonsensical notion of weakening, only because the bootikins do the contrary. I complained of weakness on my breast, of which I complained thirty years before I ever felt the gout, and the apothecary shook his head, like a knave as he was, and said, he had feared they would have that effect. He had never thought so, and if he

had, ought to have warned me; but I believe no limb of the faculty ever laid in ambush to intercept and cut off an illness to come. If you still feel weakness, you must not wonder; the bootikins cannot make us young again. I totter as I go down stairs—but I trust I shall never totter so much as to believe in any faculty. Fools and knaves hoodwink common sense, and if it were not like insects, of which no species can be exterminated, it would not exist upon earth.

The war with our colonies, which is now declared, is a proof how much influence jargon has on human actions. A war on our own trade is *popular!* Both houses are as eager for it as they were for conquering the Indies—which acquits them a little of rapine, when they are as glad of what will impoverish them as of what they fancied was to enrich them—so like are the great vulgar, and the small. Are not you foreigners amazed? We are raising soldiers and seamen—so are the Americans; and, unluckily, can find a troop as easily as we a trooper. But we are above descending to calculation: one would think the whole legislature were of the club at Almack's, and imagined, like Charles Fox, that our fame was to rise in proportion to our losses. It is more extraordinary that Charles does not adopt their system, as they have copied his, but opposes them, and proposes to make his fortune when they are bankrupt. In the mean time bad news pours in from America. I do not believe all I hear—but fear I shall believe a great deal in spite of my teeth.

Another of your diplomatic brethren is become your

brother in the Bath—Gordon, of Brussels. He is a fool for a comedy. We have no other news, nor think of anything that is not beyond the Atlantic. You are strangely old-fashioned to trouble your head about the Conclave; we care as much about the Caliphs of Bagdad.

I misinformed you when I said that the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester had no thoughts of Italy; they propose passing next winter at Rome, but will not stop anywhere else. I say, this is their scheme, and wish it may be executed;—but am far from having any sanguine hopes about his Royal Highness. He does not mend; his cough is very bad, and I think he falls away. He will not leave England till April, because he will inoculate his children before he carries them abroad. I tremble at the delay, and have said all I dare to the duchess against it, as I am impatient to have him set out, and think no time should be lost.

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## LETTER CCXXXI.

Arlington Street, March 20, 1775.

I HAVE not written to you this month, I know: no symptom of negligence, but from want of matter. You will say, perhaps, "but there have been many long days in Parliament:" very true; but long days make small sensation, when the majorities are very great, and always on the same side. The Houses go on fulminating against America; we shall see whether

their edicts are regarded, or rather, their troops and generals. The province of New York seems to be better disposed than the other colonies; but we must wait for the re-echo of our new acts, and for the Congress in May. In three months we shall hear whether it will be war or peace. The nation will stare a little if it is the former. It is little expected, and less thought of. We are given up to profusion, extravagance, and pleasure: heroism is not at all in fashion. Cincinnatus will be found at the hazard-table, and Camillus at a ball. The vivacity of the young Queen of France has reached hither. Our young ladies are covered with more plumes than any nation that has no other covering. The first people of fashion are going to act plays, in which comedians, singers, dancers, figurantes, might all walk at a coronation. The summer is to open with a masquerade on the Thames. I am glad the American enthusiasts are so far off; I don't think we should be a match for them. We want more Indies; we cannot afford to lose any.

So you have chosen a Pope! Which will he fear most, France and Spain, or poison?

The Duke of Gloucester has lost his second daughter; both were inoculated, that he might carry them abroad. The youngest was very unhealthy, and died the next day after the disorder appeared; the other, on whom he doats, will do well. He is far from being so himself; coughs, and falls away. I hope a better climate will save him.

I am wishing for summer; not to go on the water

in mask, but to escape from this scene of diversions. I mix in them as little as I can; they suit neither my age nor inclination. For some years I have loved the month of June, when I and all the town, for we all live together, I think, are to part.

I just now hear that Lord Bristol* is dead at the Bath. He was born to the gout from his mother's family, but starved himself to keep it off. This brought on paralytic strokes, which have despatched him. Will her Grace of Kingston now pass eldest, and condescend to be, as she really is, Countess of Bristol? or will she come over and take her trial for the becoming dignity of the exhibition in Westminster Hall? How it would sound, "Elizabeth, Countess of Bristol, alias Duchess of Kingston, come into Court!" I can tell you nothing more extraordinary, nor would any history figure near hers. It shows genius to strike out anything so new as her achievements. Though we have many uncommon personages, it is not easy for them to be superiorly particular. Adieu!

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## LETTER CCXXXII.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1775.

It is more equitable to suppose that my conception is worn out, than that the world wants events. I tell you of a nation of madmen, and yet want instances. It is certain, both that we do not grow

* George William Hervey, second Earl of Bristol.

sage, and that I have nothing to say. The town is divided into two great classes, the politicians and the pleasurists. The first are occupied with that vast fœtus, the American contest; and wars at that distance do not go on expeditiously. Wilkes has arrived at his *ne plus ultra;* he has presented a remonstrance in form to the Throne; and, with the magnanimity of an Alexander, used his triumph with moderation—in modern language, with good breeding. The younger generation game, dress, dance, go to Newmarket. Some of them, not juniors all, learn to sing. Cortez was victorious in our last opera, Montezuma. I doubt the Americans will not be vanquished in recitative.

The cause of M. de Guisnes is still going on. The publications would fill a whole shelf. The Duc d'Aiguillon has, in self-defence, sent forth their correspondence. I have not read it yet; he will find it difficult to appear white in my eyes.

Lady Gertrude Hotham, (Lord Chesterfield's sister,) one of the few whom perhaps you remember, is dead; she set her ruffle, and thence the rest of her dress, on fire, and died of it in ten days. She had wit like all her brothers, but for many years had been a Methodist. About two years ago, as the Earl was ill, she went with her Primate, Lady Huntingdon,* to try to tempt him to one of their seminaries in Wales, hoping to get at his soul by a cranny in his health. They extolled the prospects, and then there were such charming mountains! "Hold, ladies, said he; I don't

* Lady Selina Shirley, Countess Dowager of Huntingdon.

love mountains,—when your Ladyship's faith has removed the mountains, I will go thither with all my heart!" What pity there is nothing of that wit in his letters!

Is it possible this is all I should have to tell you after a month's silence? 'Tis well I have made it a rule to be punctual; how natural to wait till something should happen, if I were not a prodigy of regularity! I am here alone, courting a coy spring, who sends me a cross answer by an east wind, and am forced to content myself with the old housekeeper, a fire. I have books, and prints, and playthings, and the time passes agreeably, but will not do to relate. Your letters will be particularly acceptable, when you have got your nephew—not that nephews are charming things, but I am sure you will like yours, though you must allow for a vast difference in your ideas. You have been forty years out of England, and can have but a very faint image of what it is now. You have seen nothing but raw boys and rawer governors. Your nephew has just lived long enough to be formed on the present scale; at Florence one may subsist for a century on the same way of thinking. He has drops of your and his father's blood, that is, gentle, humane feelings. Talk to his heart, not to his language. In short, think that any thing you see, and do not approve, is the growth of the age, and not peculiar to him. When you discover his father, be sure it is his own. Believe me, I found him so preferable to his contemporaries, that I loved him. Adieu!

Arlington Street, April 22.

This letter would have set out yesterday if I had come to town, as I intended: now it cannot depart till Tuesday; and for anything it contains, will arrive time enough. Yours of the 8th met me here, and seems to complain of my long silence. The beginning of my letter shows I was conscious it was time to write—and yet I am not aware that I have ever exceeded the interval of a month: and am never so long without writing, if anything material happens.

I dined to-day at the Exhibition of Pictures, with the Royal Academicians. We do not beat Titian or Guido, yet. Zoffani has sent over a wretched Holy Family. What is he doing? Does he return, or go to Russia, as they say? He is the Hogarth of Dutch painting, but, no more than Hogarth, can shine out of his own way. He might have drawn the "Holy Family" well, if he had seen them *in statu quo*. Sir Joshua Reynolds is a great painter, but, unfortunately, his colours seldom stand longer than crayons. We have a Swede, one Loutherbourg, who would paint landscape and cattle excellently if he did not in every picture indulge some one colour inordinately. Horse, dogs, and animals we paint admirably, and a few landscapes well. The prices of all are outrageous, and the numbers of professors still greater. We have an American, West, who deals in high history, and is vastly admired, but he is heavier than Guercino, and has still less grace, and is very inferior. We have almost a statuary or two, and very good architects; but as Vanbrugh dealt in quarries, and

Kent in lumber, Adam, our most admired, is all gingerbread, filigraine, and fan-painting. Wyat, less fashionable, has as much taste, is grander, and more pure. We have private houses that cost more than the Palace Pitti.* Will you never come and see your fine country before it is undone ?

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## LETTER CCXXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, May 7, 1775.

METHINKS I am grown an uninteresting correspondent. Yet I know not how to help it. I never could *compose* letters ; they were forced to write themselves, and live upon their daily bread. I have not only done with politics, but politics have done with themselves. They depend on Opposition, as a private dispute does—and there is scarce any such thing—I mean in these islands. There is, indeed, beyond the seas an opposition, so big, that most folks call it a rebellion, which if computed by the tract of country it occupies, we, as so diminutive in comparison, ought rather be called in rebellion to that. All the late letters thence are as hostile as possible ; and, unless their heads are as cool as their hearts seem determined, it will not belong before we hear of the overt-acts of war. Our three generals are sailed, and Gage will have a pretty large army. They say he is preparing to attack the American magazine. Our stake is deep, though, like other rebellions, this does not aim at the capital : yet it is that kind of war, in which

* Palace of the Great Dukes at Florence.

even victory may ruin us. Some of your *corps diplomatique* menace us with the great armaments preparing in Spain, but the Stocks, that are no heroes, do not seem to believe them; and I am too brave to be frightened before they are. I live a good deal here, and the Spaniards must be at Brentford before I shall make the militia of Twickenham turn out. The map of America I have forgotten, and cannot learn it again now, but leave it to a younger generation, whose business it will be.

I have outlived very nearly all the persons that were on the stage when I came into the world. My contemporaries seem going too. I have lost three of them very lately, Lady Milton,* General Boscawen,† and the Duchess of Montagu ‡—I don't believe the latter's death has put the same thoughts into her widower's head as it has into mine: he will think of leaving a young duke, before he packs up. The Duchess has given 7000*l.* a-year to her daughter the Duchess of Buccleuch, and as much to the Duke of Montagu, yet only for his life, so perhaps she was not very desirous of his having a son and heir. Another of our number is dying, the Duchess of Northumberland. Her turtle will not be so impatient for a mate, as his § patent

* Lady Caroline Sackville, daughter of Lionel Duke of Dorset, and wife of Joseph Damer Lord Milton.

† Third son of Hugh, first Viscount Falmouth.

‡ Mary, second daughter of John second Duke of Montagu.

§ George Brudenel, Earl of Cardigan, husband of Lady Mary Montagu, one of the two co-heiresses of Duke John; and Sir Hugh Smithson, Earl of Northumberland, husband of Lady Elizabeth Seymour, sole heiress of Algernon Duke of Somerset, were to be created Dukes at the

does not enable him to beget Percys—a master or miss Smithson would sound like natural children.

The papers, my only informers, say your new Pope has opened the cage of the Jesuits, and let them fly. So has the King of France done for Madame du Barri. I suppose both will return to their former professions, —different kinds of intrigue. His Holiness, I suppose, was afraid of following his predecessor too soon.

The present session, say my oracles, is to end this month. So is the cause of Monsieur de Guisnes—it is time; the controversy amounts to many volumes, and exhausted my patience; I could not go through it. His adversary, I am told by those who have more phlegm, has lost all temper and discretion, abuses even his protectors, and the public, for being against him. This looks well for De Guisnes; if anything can pay him for what he has undergone! What courage any man must have that supports a controversy! It is treating your enemies with everything that can be said to your prejudice. How can one hate one enemy more than all?

As Strawberry furnishes so little, and this letter is not impatient to set out, I shall carry it to town, and keep it for more bulk. Yet I must commend myself a little first. I have finished this house and place these

same time, but as it was from the pretensions of their wives, George III. rightly would not entail the Dukedoms on their children by other wives. The Earl of Cardigan would not accept it on that condition; the Earl of Northumberland did, and was made a Duke. Soon after Lord Cardigan got the Dukedom without that limitation, and only lost the precedence he would have had over Lord Cardigan, who was a senior Earl.

three years, and yet am content with and enjoy it—a very uncommon case in a country where nobody is pleased but while they are improving, and where they are tired the moment they have done. I choose my house should enjoy itself, which poor houses and gardens seldom do, for people go on mending till they die, and the next comer, who likes to improve too, begins to mend all that has been done. I knew what I wished; I have it, and am satisfied—and yet do not forget that I am one of my contemporaries! I have all my life been blessed with knowing my own mind. I never wished to be *anybody*, that is, anything; and when the moments have arrived in which I might have been what I pleased, I resisted them, and persisted in my nothinghood. I hated Parliament, resolved to quit it, and did: was told I should repent, but never have. There ends my panegyric on myself; and pray don't think it very high flown, when the sum of all is, that I am content with a small house and garden, and with being nobody.

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## LETTER CCXXXIV.

Strawberry Hill, May 17, 1775.

If you could not help writing, my dear sir, to tell me of your nephew's arrival, I can as little help wishing you joy of it, though I wrote to you but last week. I told you how pleased and charmed you would be with him; and you must allow I am a good judge

of the harmony of such natures as yours and his. Keep him as long as you can, and may the pure air of Florence restore Lady Lucy's health!

I have nothing of news to add to my last. The Ministers are easy about the Spanish fleet. For France, she has business of her own. There have been great tumults even in Paris on the dearness of corn. The King is already angry with his restored Parliament, who, fancying itself restored to liberty, took upon itself to examine the rioters. The new Well-beloved posted to his *lit de justice*, but was in such a passion that, though he attempted it four times, he could not speak; others may fancy, he wanted words from more causes than one. I saw a gentleman the other day just arrived from Paris, who says the clergy are suspected of having excited the commotions. The Ministers, who fear the return of the Duc de Choiseul, choose to impute them to him.

When I came out of town Lord Temple was thought dying. The Duchess of Northumberland is still alive.

By what you say of Mr. Seymour, the Pretender and his wife should be at Paris; is that so? All the English seem to be in love with her: at least the future Lord Temple* was so.

You have not more masquerades in Carnival than we have; there is one at the Pantheon to-night, another on Monday; and in June is to be a pompous one on the water, and at Ranelagh. This and the first are given by the club called the *Sçavoir Vivre*, who till

* Richard Grenville, who became the second Earl Temple.

now have only shone by excess of gaming. The leader is that fashionable orator Lord Lyttelton,* of whom I need not tell *you* more. I have done with these diversions, and enjoy myself here. Your old acquaintance, Lord and Lady Dacre, and your old friend Mr. Chute, dined with me to-day: poor Lord Dacre† is carried about, though not worse than he has been these twenty years. Strawberry was in great beauty; what joy I should have in showing it to you! Is this a wish I must never indulge? Alas!

I have had a long chain of thoughts since I wrote the last paragraph. They ended in smiling at the word *never*. How one pronounces it to the last moment! Would not one think I counted on a long series of years to come? Yet no man has the termination of all his views more before his eyes, or knows better the idleness of framing visions to one's-self. One passes away so soon, and worlds succeed to worlds, in which the occupiers build the same castles in the air. What is ours but the present moment? And how many of mine are gone! And what do I want to show you? A plaything-vision, that has amused a poor transitory mortal for a few hours, and that will pass away like its master! Well, and yet is it not as sensible to conform to common ideas, and to live while one lives? Perhaps the wisest way is to cheat one's-self. Did one concentre all one's thoughts on the nearness and certainty of dissolution,

* Thomas, second Lord Lyttelton; he had been at Florence.

† Thomas Lennard Barret; his wife was sister of Lord Camden.

all the world would lie eating and sleeping like the savage Americans. Our wishes and views were given us to gild the dream of life, and if a Strawberry Hill can soften the decays of age, it is wise to embrace it, and due gratitude to the Great Giver to be happy with it. The true pain is the reflection on the numbers that are not so blessed; yet I have no doubt but the real miseries of life,—I mean those that are unmerited and unavoidable,—will be compensated to the sufferers. Tyrants are a proof of an hereafter. Millions of men cannot be formed for the sport of a cruel child.

How happy is the Pretender in missing a Crown! When dead, he will have all the advantage that other Kings have, the being remembered; and that greater advantage, which Kings who die in their childhood have, historians will say, he would have been a great King if he had lived to reign; and that greatest advantage, which so very few of them have, his reign will be stained with no crimes and blunders. If he is at Florence, pray recommend me to him for his historian; you see I have all the qualities a Monarch demands, I am disposed to flatter him. You may tell him too what I have done for his uncle Richard III.* The deuce is in it, if I am not qualified for a royal historiographer, when I have whitewashed one of the very few whom my brethren, so contrary to their custom, have agreed to traduce. Adieu!

* Alluding to his "Historic Doubts" concerning Richard III.

22nd.

Our papers will tell you, or your own, that the Queen of Denmark is dead—happily for her, I think, if she had any feeling. They say it was a rapid putrid fever. I know no more of it, for I am but this moment come to town to get my mourning.

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## LETTER CCXXXV.

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1775.

I AM delighted in your satisfaction with your nephew; and now begin to fear the pain you will have in parting with him and his amiable family. The Emperor's presence will not compensate the loss, for you feel more in your private capacity than your public, though you are so excellent a *diplomatique*. You must lower your royal crest a little, for your Majesty's forces have received a check in America; but this is too sad a subject for mirth. I cannot tell you anything very positively: the Ministers, nay the orthodox Gazette, holds its tongue. This day se'nnight it was divulged by a London Evening-Post extraordinary, that a ship on its way to Lisbon, happened to call *at* England, and left some very wonderful accounts, nay, and affidavits, saying, to wit, that General Gage had sent nine hundred men to nail up the cannon and seize a magazine at Concord; of which the accidental captain owns, two cannon were spiked or damaged. An hundred and fifty Americans, who swear they were

fired on first, disliked the proceeding, returned blows, and drove back the party. Lord Percy was despatched to support them, but new recruits arriving, his Lordship sent for better advice, which he received, and it was, to retire, which he did. The King's troops lost an hundred and fifty, the enemy not an hundred. The captain was sent for to be examined, but refused. He says, Gage sent away a sloop four days before he sailed, which sloop, I suppose, is gone to Lisbon, for in eight days we have no news of it. The public were desired by authority to suspend their belief; but their patience is out, and they persist in believing the first account, which seems the rather probable, in that, another account is come of the mob having risen at New York, between anger and triumph, and have seized, unloaded, and destroyed the cargoes of two ships that were going with supplies to Gage; and, by all accounts, that whole continent is in a flame.

So here is this fatal war commenced!

> The child that is unborn shall rue
> The hunting of that day!

We are perfectly easy about Spain's armada, and say, that too is bound for Lisbon. The Prince of Masserano is arrived, and no doubt condemns our rebellious colonists highly. Those gentlemen do not seem to be at all afraid of your question, whether they could not be sent for over, and tried. A colonel of their militia has sworn before a justice of peace that he ordered his men to fire on the King's troops, and

has sent over a copy of his affidavit—perhaps in hopes of being knighted.

Well, we don't mind all this,—we the nation. We go on diverting ourselves, and are to have a regatta on the Thames the end of this month. The French are grown philosophers, and we dance. Tell your sorrowful friend Mrs. Pitt, and the afflicted widow, that English ladies cry no longer. Low spirits are out of fashion. We have transplanted every folly under the heavens hither. We have had fandangos, and festinos, and regattas. If the Americans provoke us, we will sail forth in our Bucentaur and cuckold them with their spouse the Atlantic.

This is a gazette extraordinary, so need not be long; besides, I have been here these four days all alone, and know nothing but what the newspapers tell me. If it were not for you, I should not know there was such a person in the world as the Emperor. Our neighbour King Louis is gone to be crowned. He was besieged for three days in Versailles by twenty thousand men, and in danger of Lord Peterborough's* Sacre, who, when he was shown the Sainte Ampoulle at Rheims, and the monk asked him, "Monsieur, est-ce-que vous sacrez vos Rois?" replied, "Non, Monsieur, nous les massacrons." Insurrections in France! insurrections in Bohemia! insurrections in America! methinks the world is subject to centenary fevers! Adieu! the Horatii! I quite enjoy your mutual satisfaction in each other.

* Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, celebrated by Pope.

## LETTER CCXXXVI.

Arlington Street, July 6, 1775.

A MONTH is elapsed since I wrote to you, I know; nor am I eager to resume the correspondence, when I have nothing pleasant to tell you. Indeed, can the events of a civil war ever be welcome news? One must be deeply embarked on one side or the other, if one ever rejoices. They who wish well to the whole, can have but one cheerful moment, which is that of peace — a moment that seems at great distance! I know no details, for I enquire not after them. The general complexion is war. All advices speak the Americans determined, and report says the Government here intends to pursue the same plan. I told you at first, I thought you and I should not see the end of this breach; and if we do not, I know what posterity will see, the ruin of both countries, at least of this. Can we support the loss of America, or a long war?

There is a black cloud nearer. The Livery of London have begun a quarrel with the King, and have actually proclaimed war on his Ministers, as you will see by the papers. I do not take panic; but, if any blow should happen from America, the mob of London is a formidable foe on a sudden: a minister may be executed before he is impeached; and, considering the number of American merchants in the City, and of those who have connexions in America, riots may be raised: but I hate to prophesy.

I have always augured ill of this quarrel, and washed my hands of it. It has made me resume a thought, which my age and indolence do not incline me to, another journey to Paris. You will, perhaps, hear I am setting out before my usual period of writing. There is another person* going abroad that rejoices me more, and who, I am sure, had better be out of England at this crisis. He is extremely well at present, yet certainly should not risk the winter here; he proposes to pass the next at Rome. I should like myself to spend it at Paris, but dare not hazard the gout out of my own house, unless things grow still more serious. I have long been sick of politics; when they are so very grave, they are painful; and though I have nothing to do with them, the ill-humour they occasion, and the perpetual discourse on them, are exceedingly disagreeable to one whose whole wishes are centred in repose.

I am come this morning from Lord Dacre's, where I lay last night, and return to my peaceful hill tomorrow. I will not read history there, but romances; and if the present age is determined, the former shall be written in bloody characters, I will read as little of it as I can. During the first part of my life, all was peace and happiness. The middle was a scene of triumph. I am sorry to think the last volume so likely to resemble a considerable part of our story. Who can wish to have lived during the wars of York and Lancaster; or from 1641 to 1660?

* The Duke of Gloucester.

## CHAPTER CCXXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 3, 1775.

In spite of all my modesty, I cannot help thinking I have a little something of the prophet about me. At least, we have not conquered America yet. I did not send you immediate word of our victory at Boston, because the success not only seemed very equivocal, but because the conquerors lost three to one more than the vanquished. The last do not pique themselves upon modern good-breeding, but level only at the officers, of whom they have slain a vast number. We are a little disappointed, indeed, at their fighting at all, which was not in our calculation. We knew we could conquer *America in Germany,* and I doubt had better have gone thither now for that purpose, as it does not appear hitherto to be quite so feasible in America itself. However, we are determined to know the worst, and are sending away all the men and ammunition we can muster. The Congress, not asleep neither, have appointed a Generalissimo, Washington, allowed a very able officer, who distinguished himself in the last war. Well! we had better have gone on robbing the Indies; it was a more lucrative trade.

We are in no pain about the Spanish fleet. Our papers say it has its hands full at Algiers, or Tunis, I forget which. There are so many people who take care of the geography of a war, that I never trouble

my head about it. At present I am thinking of nothing but my journey to Paris, whither I am bound on the 15th. It is a little late, I own, for such a trip, and I did not think I should have so much resolution again; but my dear old blind woman* has begged it, and I cannot refuse, though I feel how terrible the parting will be, since I cannot expect to see her again. She is almost seventy-nine! In fact, her lamp burns as brightly as ever; but I am sure mine grows dim, and my spirits scarcely serve

"To rock the cradle of reposing age!"

Your brother has recovered his activity, so far as to go to Linton, where he has not been these four years.

Your friend, the Duchess of Beaufort,† has already found a great and proper party for Lady Mary; Lord Granby‡ has proposed, and you may be sure was not rebuffed. We have no other news but the American, which keeps our summer in full talk. Every day proclaims something, but so many lies, that I always wait for the echo; and advise you to do so too, or you will have many abortive beliefs.

The heroine Kingston is almost forgotten. Foote had a mind to have revived her story on the stage; but Lord Hertford would not license his piece.§ It is still thought she will be tried and convicted, but

* Madame la Marquise du Deffand.

† Widow of Lord Noel Somerset, Duke of Beaufort.

‡ Grandson and successor of John Manners, Duke of Rutland.

§ It was called a *Trip to Calais*, and was acted afterwards, but much altered.

her Countess-hood will save her Duchess-hood from being burnt in its hand. Adieu!

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LETTER CCXXXVIII.

Paris, Sept. 7, 1775.

YOUR letter of Aug. 12th followed me hither from England. I can answer it from hence with less reserve than I should at home. I understand very well, my dear sir, the propriety of the style in which you write in your ministerial capacity, and never wish to have you expose yourself to any inconvenience by unnecessary frankness. I am too much convinced of your heart and head not swerving from the glorious principles in which we were both educated, to suspect you of having adopted the principles instilled into so many Englishmen by Scotch Jacobites, the authors of the present, as they have been of every, civil war,—hence the days of Queen Elizabeth. You will on your side not be surprised that I am what I always was, a zealot for liberty in every part of the Globe, and consequently that I most heartily wish success to the Americans. They have hitherto not made *one* blunder; and the Administration have made a thousand, besides the two capital ones, of first provoking, and then of uniting the colonies. The latter seem to have as good heads as hearts, as we want both. The campaign seems languishing. The Ministers will make all their efforts against the spring. So no doubt will the Americans

too. Probably the war will be long. On the side of England, it must be attended with ruin. If England prevails, English and American liberty is at an end! If the colonies prevail, our commerce is gone—and if, at last, we negotiate, they will neither forgive nor give us our former advantages.

The country, where I now am, is, luckily, neither in a condition or disposition to meddle. If it did, it would complete our destruction, even by only assisting the colonies, which I can scarce think they are blind enough not to do. They openly talk of our tyranny and folly with horror and contempt, and perhaps with amazement, and so does almost every foreign minister here, as well as every Frenchman. Instead of being mortified, as I generally am when my country is depreciated, I am comforted by finding that, though but one of very few in England, the sentiments of the rest of the world concur with, and confirm mine. The people with us are fascinated; and what must we be, when Frenchmen are shocked at our despotic acts! Indeed, both this nation, and their King, seem to embrace the most generous principles—the only fashion, I doubt, in which we shall not imitate them! Too late, our eyes will open!

The Duke* and Duchess are at Venice. Nothing ever exceeded the distinctions paid to them in this country. The King even invited them to Paris; but the Duke's haste to be more southerly before the bad weather begins, would not permit him to accept of

* Of Gloucester.

that honour. They do not expect the same kindness everywhere—and for the English, they have even let the French see what slaves they are, by not paying their duty to the Duke and Duchess. I have written to her, without naming you, to dissuade their fixing at Rome — I fear, in vain. I proposed Sienna to them, as I flatter myself the Emperor's goodness for the Duke would dispose the Great Duke to make it agreeable to them; and their residence there would not commit *you*. Indeed, I do not believe you suspect me of sacrificing you to the interests of my family. On the other hand, I wish you, for your own sake, to take any opportunities of paying your court to them indirectly. They are both warm and hurt at the indignities they have received. In our present distracted situation, it is more than possible that the Duke may be a very important personage. I know well that you have had full reason to be dissatisfied with him; I remember it as much as you can: but you are too prudent, as well as too good-natured, not to forgive a young prince. I own I am in pain about the Duchess. She has all the good qualities of her father,* but all his impetuosity; and is much too apt to resent affronts, though her virtue and good-nature make her as easily reconciled; but her first movements are not discreet. I wish you to please her as much as possible, within your instructions. She has admirable sense, when her passions do not predominate. In one word, her marriage has given me many

* Sir Edward Walpole.

SAMUEL FOOTE.

PAINTED BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF
DAVID GARRICK, ESQR.

a pang; and though I never gave into it, I endeavour by every gentle method to prevent her making her situation still worse; and, above all things, I try never to inflame. It is all I can do where I have no ascendant, which, with a good deal of spirit of my own, I cannot expect: however, as I perfectly understand both my parties and myself, I manage pretty well. I know when to stoop, and when to stop; and when I will stoop or will not. I should not be so pliant, if they were where they ought to be.

That heroine of Doctors' Commons, about whom you inquire, the Duchess of Kingston, has at last made her folly, which I have long known, as public as her shame, by entering the lists with a merry Andrew, but who is no fool. Foote was bringing her on the stage: Lord Hertford* prohibited his piece. Drunk with triumph, she would give the mortal blow with her own hand—

"Pallas te hoc vulnere Pallas immolat;"

but, as the instrument she chose was a *goose*-quill, the stroke recoiled on herself. She wrote a letter in the "Evening Post," which, not the lowest of her class, who tramp in pattens, would have set her mark to. Billinsgate from a ducal coronet was inviting: however, Foote, with all the delicacy she ought to have used, replied only with wit, irony, and confounded satire. The Pope will not be able to wash out the spots with all the holy water in the Tiber.

* Lord Chamberlain.

I imagine she will escape a trial; but Foote has given her the *coup de grace.*

Lord Chatham, when I left England, was in a very low, languishing way: his constitution, I believe, too much exhausted to throw out the gout; and then it falls on his spirits. The last letters speak of his case as not desperate. He might, if allowed,—and it was practicable,—do much good still. Who else can, I know not. The Opposition is weak every way. They have better hearts than the Ministers, fewer good heads: not that I am in admiration of the latter. Times may produce men. We must trust to the book of events, if we will flatter ourselves. Make no answer to this; only say you received my letter from Paris, and direct to England. I may stay here a month longer; but it is uncertain.

P. S. 11th.

I had made up my letter; but those I received from England last night bring such important intelligence, I must add a paragraph. That miracle of gratitude, the Czarina, has consented to lend England twenty thousand Russians, to be transported to America. The Parliament is to meet on the 20th of next month, and vote twenty-six thousand seamen! What a paragraph of blood is there! With what torrents must liberty be preserved in America! In England what can save it? Oh! mad, mad England! What frenzy, to throw away its treasures, lay waste its empire of wealth, and sacrifice its freedom, that its prince may be the arbitrary lord of boundless deserts in America, and of an

impoverished, depopulated, and thence insignificant, island in Europe! and what prospect of comfort has a true Englishman? Why, that Philip the Second miscarried against the boors of Holland, and that Louis the Fourteenth could not replace James the Second on the throne!

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## LETTER CCXXXIX.

Paris, Oct. 10, 1775.

I AM still here; though on the wing. Your answer to mine from hence was sent back to me from England; as I have loitered here beyond my intention: in truth, from an indisposition of mind. I am not impatient to be in a frantic country, that is stabbing itself in every vein. The delirium still lasts; though, I believe, kept up by the quacks that caused it. Is it credible that five or six of the great *trading* towns have presented addresses against the Americans? I have no doubt but those addresses are procured by those boobies the country gentlemen, their members, and bought of the Alderman; but, is it not amazing that the merchants and manufacturers do not duck such tools in a horse-pond? When the storm will recoil I do not know, but it will be terrible in all probability, though too late. Never shall we be again what we have been! Other powers, who sit still, and wisely suffer us to plunge over head and ears, will perhaps be alarmed at what they write from England,

that we are to buy twenty thousand Russian assassins, at the price of Georgia : how deep must be our game, when we pursue it at the expense of establishing a new maritime power, and aggrandize that engrossing throne, which threatens half Europe, for the satisfaction of enslaving our own brethren ! Horrible policy ! If the Americans, as our papers say, are on the point of seizing Canada, I should think that France would not long remain neuter, when she may regain her fur-trade with the Canadians, or obtain Canada from the Americans : but it is endless to calculate what we may lose. Our Court has staked everything against despotism ; and the nation, which must be a loser, whichever side prevails, takes part against the Americans, who fight for the nation as well as for themselves ! what Egyptian darkness !

This country is far more happy. It is governed by benevolent and beneficent men, under a prince who has not yet betrayed a fault, and who will be as happy as his people if he always employs such men. Messieurs de Turgot and Malesherbes are philosophers in the true sense, that is, legislators ; but, as their plans tend to serve the public, you may be sure they do not please interested individuals. The French, too, are light and fickle ; and designing men, who have no weapon against good men but ridicule, already employ it to make a trifling nation laugh at its benefactors : and, if it is the fashion to laugh, the laws of fashion will be executed preferably to those of common sense.

There is a great place just vacant. The Maréchal

de Muy, Secrétaire d'Etat pour la Guerre, died yesterday, having been cut the day before for the stone. The operation lasted thirty-five ages, that is, minutes!

Our Parliament meets on the 26th, and I suppose will act as infamously as it did last year. It cannot do worse,—scarcely so ill, for now it cannot act inconsiderately. To joke in voting a civil war is the *comble* of infamy. I hope it will present flattering addresses on our disgraces, and heap taxes on those who admire the necessity of them. If the present generation alone would be punished by inviting the yoke, it were pity but it were already on their necks! Do not wonder at my indignation, nor at my indulging it. I can write freely hence—from England, where I may find the Inquisition, it would not be so prudent; but judge of our situation, when an Englishman, to speak his mind, must come to France! and hither I will come, unless the times alter. I had rather live where a Maupeou* is banished, than where he is Chief Justice.†

I know nothing of their Royal Highnesses,‡ nor have heard of them since they were at Strasburgh. I wrote twice to Venice; and if they think me in England, and have written thither, I should have received the letter, as I did yours, unless it is stopped. I can give you no advice, but to act prudently and decently, as you always do. If you receive orders, you must obey them. If you do not, you may show disposition; and

* Chancellor of France. † Alluding to Lord Mansfield.
‡ The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

yet I would not go too far. Even under orders, you may intimate concern; but I would express nothing in writing. My warmth may hurt myself, but never shall make me forget the interest of my friends. Adieu!

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LETTER CCXL.

Arlington Street, Oct. 23, 1775.

THIS will be delivered to you by Mr. Pars,* a painter, who is going to improve himself in Italy. He has already great merit, and has done several things for me, particularly, washed drawings of Strawberry, of which he can talk to you very perfectly. This was his style originally. He executed an excellent volume full of them for Lord Palmerston,† one of the Lords of the Admiralty, his protector. He has since taken to oil and portraits. Pray assist him as much as you can, particularly by strong recommendations to Rome and Cardinal Albani.‡ Pray, too, make him do a view of Fiesole for me. He is very modest, sensible, and intelligent, and not mad, or I would not recommend him so strongly. I give him a letter to Sir William Hamilton.

* Mr. Pars died at Rome in 1782.

† Henry Temple Viscount Palmerston. Mr. Pars had been in Switzerland with his lordship to take views.

‡ Cardinal Alexander Albani, youngest nephew of Clement XI. and a great lover of *virtù*. He was also a friend to England.

## LETTER CCXLI.

Arlington Street, Oct. 28, 1775.

As this letter will go to Paris by a private hand before it gets to the post, I shall not change the late free style of my letters, but speak my mind. Not having always the same opportunity, I shall be more circumspect both for your sake and my own.

At my return I found everything in great confusion. The Ministers had only provoked and united—not intimidated, wounded, or divided America. Errors in or neglect of execution have rendered everything much worse; and at this instant they are not sure that the King has a foot of dominion left on that continent. Boston must be, if it is not, abandoned: Halifax, with a stand of seven thousand arms, artillery, &c., is taken,*—and well it might be! It was guarded but by fifty men! Canada is in equal danger, and the first letters are likely to say that it is gone. The Ministers say that it will take sixty thousand men to reconquer America. They will as soon have sixty thousand armies. Whether they can get any Russians is not even yet certain; and, as it is said they must buy them by ceding some post, it is not credible that the other European powers will wink at that growing puissance becoming a maritime one. Distresses and difficulties increase every day, and genius does not increase in proportion.

* This did not prove true.

Before I tell you of the opening of the Parliament, I must treat you with a farce, which is contrary to the theatric rule. Whether they were frightened themselves, or meant to frighten others, two days before the meeting, the Ministers cried out, a plot! and took and committed to the Tower a Mr. Sayer, a banker of no great credit, and lately one of Wilkes's sheriffs. A young American officer of still worse character, swore Sayer had tried to bribe him to betray the Tower; and, as if that was not trusting him enough, communicated his intention of seizing the King as he should go to the House. The Ministers, as grave as they looked, could not keep anybody from laughing,—no, though they trebled the Guards. In short, I have heard this morning, that they have blundered in the warrant, just as they did in Wilkes's, must release Sayer, and he will be at liberty, instead of being, as he ought to be, in Bedlam. Earl Rochford* will be prosecuted in his room, instead of being shut up for a fool, as he ought to be.

In both Houses the war was brisk and warm; the Lords sat till eleven, and the Commons till four, and the Court was galled, though it kept the field. In the former house the Lord Privy Seal, Grafton, deserted and fired on them; so did the *virtuous* Lord Lyttelton,* whom they have so much tried to blanch; but as they had only given him whitewash, money to buy it, he is seeking to plunder from the other camp.

* The Secretary of State who committed Sayer.

† Thomas second Lord Lyttelton.

In the Commons, Mr. Conway,* in a better speech than ever was made, exposed all their outrages and blunders; and Charles Fox told Lord North, that not Alexander nor Cæsar had ever conquered so much as he had lost in one campaign. Even his Lorship's friends, nay the Scotch, taunt him in public with his laziness.

This is a sketch of the present situation: I think it will not mend abroad, and must grow more turbulent at home. France and Spain, by only feeding the war underhand, can baffle all our attempts; and without their declaring themselves, we must exhaust our men, money, navies, and trade. These are the four trifling articles we pay for the old scheme of arbitrary power. When will the Kings of England learn how great they may be by the constitution; how sure of ruin if they try to be despotic? Cannot the fate of the Stuarts teach even the House of Hanover to have common sense? In the meantime, if France has the the sense† to keep its present Ministers, it will soon be greater than ever. I could not have believed, if I had not seen with my own eyes, how very flourishing it is to what it was four years ago. It is safe, too, in that country to indulge the people in plenty, ease, liberty; for they who could admire even Louis Quatorze, adored Henri Quatre; but what signify common-place reflections? Princes do not read my letters, but always forfeit their own greatness by listening to

* General Henry Seymour Conway, only brother of Francis Earl of Hertford.

† It had not; Turgot was removed, and Malesherbes resigned.

Ministers who dip them in visions of power only to augment their own. A King might go to sleep, and be happy, and let his people be so, if he had no Ministers, who would abuse his authority during his nap. Adieu! my dear sir; I have not time or occasion to say more. I have given you a clue to my future letters, and you will not want to have notes to them.

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LETTER CCXLII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 14, 1775.

YOUR letter, my dear sir, of the 28th, which I received last night, is infinitely kind to me—but is that new? We had not only been alarmed to the utmost about the duke,* but remained ten days in that anxiety. Thank God! yesterday, a letter under his own hand dispelled all our fears, and he is so well as to be set out to Rome. I am very sorry you had received no orders for your behaviour, because it leaves the duke room to think you might have done more than I hope you have done; but your first duty is to the King; you were my friend long before I had the honour of knowing his Royal Highness, and no attachments of mine can make me ever even wish that any friend of mine should act contrary to his duty. I am sure you have not; and if the duke should not be quite pleased with you, though I flatter myself he is too just not to weigh your situation, you must bear it

* The Duke of Gloucester.

with patience, and comfort yourself with having acted rightly.

Though I hear so much of it, I know not what to say of America. It is certain that the campaign has answered none of the expectations of the Administration. It seems to be the opinion now that they will think of pacific measures. They have even talked in Parliament of treating. You may be sure that system would be agreeable to my politics; but I doubt peace is not so near. The Parliament grants whatever is asked; and yet a great alteration has happened in the Administration. The Duke of Grafton has changed sides, and was turned out last Friday. Lord Rochford, too, has retired, though not out of humour; and Lord Dartmouth has quitted the American province and taken the Privy Seal. Lord George Germaine is made Secretary of State for America, and Lord Weymouth has taken the southern province. Lord Ashburnham is to be Groom of the Stole, Lord Pelham Master of the Great Wardrobe, and Lord Lyttelton Justice in Eyre. The town is impatient to see whether this change of men implies any change of measures. I do not see why it should, for none of the new Ministers have ever inclined to the Americans; and I doubt whether the success of the latter will make them have a better disposition towards the present Administration. They have felt their strength, and experienced how much less hurt we can do them than we imagined. If they have such ideas of independence as have been imputed to them, and as probably some ambitious men

among them may have, we have done nothing to convince them that their plan is impracticable; but for me, I own I know nothing, and all my conjectures may be wrong.

We have scarce any other news. Madame Kingston has petitioned the House of Lords for her trial; but they seem eager neither to acquit nor condemn her. Nobody would mind the first, and she would not mind the second, as it would go only to infamy, which she has shown she can digest.

Orloff the Great, or rather the Big,* is here; and as proud of his infamous diamonds as the Duchess of Kingston herself. He dances gigantic dances and makes gigantic love; but not conquests; yet he has quitted his post with honour, for the Empress has appointed two to supply his functions—I suppose they are Gog and Magog. Orloff talks an infinite deal of nonsense; but parts are not necessary to a royal favourite or to an assassin.

I am rejoiced you are to have so much of your nephew, and that Lady Lucy is better. I long heartily for a little *Man-n.*

You will ere long see Mr. Pars, a young painter, who is going to study at Rome. I had given him a strong letter to you. Poor man! He has lost his portmanteau between Calais and Paris, and with it everything he had in the world; yet he persists. Pray be kind to him for my sake and for his misfortune. He is very ingenious, and has taken to oils. He

* The favourite lover of the Empress Catherine II.

was admirable in washed views, and has done several of Strawberry, of which he can talk to you by heart. Assist him too in recommendations at Rome as much as you can. He is particularly patronised by Lord Palmerston, one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

So the Pretender is in a dying way! and wants an heir!—It is not a race of phœnixes. Sir Roger Newdigate is at Rome, and formerly would have been proud to be chief mourner at his funeral.

You may imagine I shall not be quite easy till the Duchess* is delivered and well. I trembled for her when the Duke was ill, as his death might have occasioned hers too.

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## LETTER CCXLIII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 8, 1775.

I HAVE received another kind letter from you, my dear sir, about the Duke and Duchess. You are very good to inform me; for though the Duchess's daughters send me general accounts, I know nothing directly, having received but a single letter from her Royal Highness since they set out. I need not say to you, that I never had such an honour from the Duke. He, I do not doubt, is recovered, and will for some time be the better, as he was before, from so wholesome an illness. I cannot be so tranquil on her situation till after her delivery. The greatness of her courage makes her support conflicts; but, perhaps, women

* The Duchess of Gloucester.

of less resolution, who abandon themselves to fears, undergo less struggles.

Your brother, I believe, is recovered, at least Mr. Croft thinks so. He is always lame, it is true, but his face still fresh and juvenile. You and I are wrinkled parchments to our elder brothers. They are Glastonbury thorns and bloom at their Christmas. I pretend to grow a little fatter, but every other winter unravels me like Penelope's web.

There is nothing new here, at least within the sphere of my knowledge. That circle is of slender extent, and does not intersect either that of the Court or the other of the Opposition : the secrets of neither reach me, who seek not to penetrate them. We have both martial and pacific symptoms. Commissaries are going with olive branches, and acts of Parliament and regiments with daggers and swords. We seem to enrage America, as if it were a passionate man who is very sorry the moment his passion is over. The House of Commons sits eternally, though half of the usual number are gone out of town.

I saw the Duchess of Beaufort the other night, who inquired much after you. You know her daughter is to marry Lord Granby.

Tell me truly, is or has the Gabrielli been a great singer? She has, at least, not honoured us but with a most slender low voice. Her action is just, but colder than a vestal's. However, as you know, she carries the resemblance no farther, and, consequently, is kept by a Mr. Piers, a very rich gentleman of York-

shire, who is so profuse to her, that I suppose she will be more capricious than ever. We import superannuated syrens, and spoil them more than the Italians can afford to do, who at least enjoy them young.

That brave statue, Sir Charles Saunders,* died yesterday. The present war has not yet furnished us with any recruit of heroes. A civil war used to be prolific—Europe is very much worn out. It is America's turn to be fruitful of genius. The last comet of this hemisphere, the King of Prussia, is on its *return.* A wit of last century, when *conceits* were in fashion, would have said, that its blazing tail turned out, as some philosophers have held, to be water, for he is dying of a dropsy. I care not of what; the World will be delivered from one of its visitations. When Voltaire follows him, their meeting would make a good "Dialogue of the Dead."

I will not lengthen my letter when I have no more to say, for though we have an empire at each end of the world, and a war in both, they do not keep us in daily news; and, what is much stranger, their metropolis, London, stagnates; but it is generally so about Christmas and autumn: in February, March, April, and May, our pulses are very feverish.

* Admiral and Knight of the Bath. He was remarkably taciturn.

## LETTER CCXLIV.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 17, 1775.

I AM afraid the Pope will be shocked: matters go very ill with his friend the Duchess of Kingston. She pretended to teaze the House of Lords for her trial though privately soliciting against it. Lord Mansfield entered the lists as her knight; and contended for a private hearing in the chamber of Parliament; and treated the affair very lightly. This revolted the Chancellor;* and he drew her failings in very ungentle colours. A committee was appointed to examine precedents. Her Grace was alarmed; went to St. James's Chapel at eight in the morning; and was delivered of a scream that roused all the Palace. The obdurate Lords' Committees proceeded. The tide was turned; and every body spoke all they knew: collusion between the Duchess and Lord Bristol, to impose on the Ecclesiastical Court; money taken by the Earl; perjury on both sides; the register of their marriage torn out, which is felony; a new certificate said to be forged: in short, nothing but a trial in Westminister Hall could satisfy justice and the public. Screams now ripened to madness; and the Duchess begged a respite for two months. That was pretty long. Her physicians were sent for. Three appeared: and, though they would not, as she desired, say that she would be mad for two months, they did allow that she is trou-

* Lord Bathurst.

bled with a great alienation of mind: in proof of which, she has written to the King, to remind him of his grandfather's and his own goodness to her; hoping he would not abandon her in her distress; and begging a *noli prosequi;* which his Majesty will not grant her. The Committee went on; and have decided that she shall be tried in Westminister Hall: and Lord Lyttelton, as bashful as herself, said, that, as she could not pretend to chastity or modesty, there was no room for compassion. This hopeful young man, who, on being refused a place, spoke *for* the Americans; and, in two days, on getting one, *against* them, being reproached with such precipitate changes, said, that, with his fortune, nobody could suppose he thought of the value of the salary.

What this heroic lady will attempt next is very unknown. If she decamps, outlawry and forfeitures follow. Laudanum she had recourse to formerly, on an emergency. If she adheres to frenzy, she must retire to a mad-house. If she braves her fate, I shall not wonder if she escapes. A fair one, more artful, but not of so high rank, nor patronized by a chief-justice, has just foiled the law; though nobody questions her guilt. This is a Mrs. Margaret Caroline Rudd; whose history would make as large a volume as Madame de Kingston's. She sent her lawyer a brief, of which he could not make head or tail. He went to her for one more clear: "And do you imagine," said she, "that I will trust you, or any attorney in England, with the truth of my story? Take your brief;

meet me in the Old Bailey, and I will ask you the necessary questions." At her trial, she did write sixty notes to him, with such artful interrogatories, that she was acquitted; and the whole court shouted with applause. I must tell you one more anecdote of Mrs. Rudd. Preparatory to her trial, she sent for some brocaded silks to a mercer; she pitched on a rich one, and ordered him to cut off the proper quantity: but the mercer, reflecting that if she were hanged, as was probable, he should never be paid, pretended he had no scissors; but would carry home the piece, cut off what she wanted, and send it to Newgate. She saw his apprehension; pulled out her pocket-book; and, giving him a bank-note of twenty pounds, said, "There is a pair of scissors." Such quickness is worth an hundred screams. We have no Joans of Arc, nor Catharines de' Medici; but this age has heroines after its own fashion: ay, and heroes, too. *Arts and sciences have* not only *travelled west*, but north, too. Prodigious crimes can flourish in the most rigorous climates. Except poisoning the last Pope, Rome itself, the soil of Neros and Borgias, has not produced a murder worth sixpence these two hundred years. Atrocious genius is got to Berlin and Petersburgh. In two or three centuries, I suppose, there will be some horrible metropolis beyond the Atlantic, or under the South Pole; and, as the press disperses *useful* precedents, two or three kings and queens will find it suits their convenience to divide some territory, to which they have no title, near the Straits of Magellan.

## LETTER CCXLV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 26, 1775.

It was very vexatious to be delivered from my own anxiety about you on Saturday last, and not to be able to remove your suspense till Tuesday. I hope, however, that the conclusion of my last week's letter diminished your apprehensions of being wronged. I now confirm you in, and invest you with, your own estate. Linton * is yours, and you are now your own master; I say nothing of particulars; there are few, and Mr. Croft † tells you them.

If you have been impatient for this letter, how anxious must I be too for your answer to my last! But you cannot hesitate to take possession of your estate, to see your country again after an absence of forty years, to see a sister you love, and friends I think you love too. Why do I doubt? I will not —I will flatter myself that you will fix here. Such long, faithful and laborious services as yours cannot remain unrewarded. Sir James Porter,‡ not so ancient a servant as you, has a pension of 1000*l.* a-year. Lord Sandwich and Mr. Mackenzie have always been your protectors; and if you have not made many other friends, never were amiable qualities so thrown away for forty years together—but what the deuce am I doing! Why do I doubt your coming?

* The family seat in Kent, which became Sir Horace Mann's by the will of his elder brother, Edward Louisa Mann.—Ed.

† The Solicitor employed.

‡ Who had been Minister at Constantinople.

Since I wrote last, public affairs are grown much more serious, and unpromising of any good issue. General Carleton has been beaten by the provincials, St. John's has surrendered to them, Quebec has probably fallen into their hands, with the whole province of Canada. You may call your neighbour the Pope ungrateful, for the Canadians joined the provincials. All this is certain; the rest seems to be credited; that our ships are destroying all the towns on the coast. This is horrible! and that the King's army could not stay in Boston, but was meditating retreat to Halifax. I don't at all warrant the last article of the bill of fare; but I may well say I see no prospect of good. Seeds of the last inveteracy sown! a whole continent to be reconquered! What lives, what money to be squandered! What damages, what breaches to be repaired! And reconciliation, how to be effected? by victories on our side, or on theirs? France is straining every nerve to repair their losses; we, every one to weaken ourselves; and weak we are to such a degree, that I hope France does not know it. Come and see us before it is worse.

The King referred to the Attorney-General the Duchess of Kingston's petition for a *noli prosequi*, and it was argued at the chambers of the Attorney. How many council do you think she had retained for that single preliminary?—a mob—only fourteen. She must be in a mortal panic; and the *noli prosequi* will not be granted. She has resumed her senses. The trial

is fixed for the end of February. Madam of Babylon* and her Canadians are not in good odour; nay, I should not wonder if, like Jane Shore's friend Mrs. Blagrave, the old harlot should appropriate the entrusted jewels to her own use, when the Duchess is standing in a white sheet.

My last letter was so voluminous that it must compensate for this. How I long to have our correspondence finish! Your next, I conclude, will mention the passage of the Duke and Duchess† through Florence. Adieu!

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## LETTER CCXLVI.

Jan. 28, 1776.

I AM in so much haste now to have our correspondence end, that I no longer love even to write you a letter. My impatience to hear that you think of coming over, is extreme—think of it!—I mean, to hear that you have fixed the time. Surely you can think of nothing else. Old Knight, the cashier,‡ used to come once a-year to Calais to look at the cliffs of England. You are not banished, as he was, but have

* The Pope, in whose custody the Duchess of Kingston was said to have left her valuable effects at Rome.

† Of Gloucester.

‡ Robert Knight, Cashier of the South-Sea Company in the memorable year 1720. His son was created Lord Luxborough, and afterwards Earl of Catherlogh, and had an only son, who died before him, without issue.

been much longer absent. I will forgive any imprudence of impetuosity to come; take care I hear of no coldness. I am almost afraid to frighten you with an account of our winter; but then it is such a winter as I never saw. I was with you at Florence in 1741, and those ever since have been springs, and sometimes summers. This was made for the North Pole, has lasted three weeks, and grows every day worse and worse. It caught me at Lord Ossory's * in Bedfordshire, and locked me up there above a fortnight. At last it gave me the gout in both hands, on which I set out directly for London through mountains of snow and quarries of ice. I am still confined, though I have had very little pain; yet I write with difficulty, and ill-humour too, for I expected no gout this year.

By your silence, though you mention them at Rome, I find their Royal Highnesses my nephew and niece did not pass through Florence, for which I am not sorry. I have had a letter from the Duchess, who tells me the Pope has been a perfect knight-errant in courtesy and gallantry, and enjoined all manner of attentions to them from his college and nobility. It is not he that sent it to me, but I have had a red hat given to me to-day —it was Cardinal Wolsey's. I am impatient to hear the result of Lady Orford's audience. I did not imagine she would ask it, as she was not content with the Duke † when he was last at Florence: I suppose she is proud of her *nepotism*.

* Ampthill. † The Duke of Gloucester.

The trial of the late Pope's friend, the Duchess of Kingston, is put off till April.

The Government is straining every nerve to muster a great army in America, though it must combat for its very landing. Fifteen thousand Hessians and Brunswickers are retained. This force, if half of it can get thither and land, must be maintained from hence. We are not apt to be frugal about our armies abroad. Guess at the millions this will cost—and come and see your country before all its splendor is at an end! Boston is famishing—what is the fate of Quebec, we do not yet know. The Parliament is met, but two-thirds of the members are frozen in the country. Omiah, the native of Otaheite, breakfasted with Mr. Conway to-day, and learns to skate. He had no notion of ice, and calls it *stone-water;* a very good expression. If he were in Ireland they would advise him to carry over some in spirits.

Shall you bring over a great many fine things for Linton? Shall you not regret all you have given to me? I would give them up to have you here. Don't you invite me to Linton? How long your letter is coming! Take care to know me when you see me. Expect me as wrinkled as Methuselah. Pray don't impute the change to thirty-five years and a tolerable quantity of gout, but to this hard winter—I assure you I looked charmingly a month ago. I have some spirits left still, and I wish I don't behave like a boy when we meet.

## LETTER CCXLVII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 15, 1776.

You have chilled me so thoroughly by the coldness of your answer, and by the dislike you express to England, that I shall certainly press you no more to come. I thought at least it would have cost you a struggle.

I have kept my bed for a fortnight with the gout in my limbs, and yesterday was the first of my rising—but it was after a sleep of eleven hours, which shows how excellent my constitution would be, if not harassed by the gout. I bear that affliction with patience—with patience, which my reflection has taught me is *the desperate substitute to Hope*, and which does not delude one with charming visions!

The Duke of Gloucester did me the honour of notifying to me the birth of his son. It was most welcome intelligence, and saved me a month's anxiety for the Duchess, who I thought was likely to go a fortnight longer.

We have no news but those of preparations against America. I can add nothing to what you know I think on that subject.

Monsieur de Guisnes has been suddenly recalled—it is said on a successful cabal of his enemies; which, if so, bodes his total ruin. As his successor is not appointed, and there is a great armament at Toulon (though said to assist the Spaniards against Algiers) the Stocks took fright, and expressed it: I don't know whether with reason—but can their panic be extremely premature?

There is talk of Lord Stormont leaving his embassy for a post in Scotland, and of Sir Joseph Yorke replacing him at Paris.

Lady Mary Coke has returned some services at Paris, and many years of great attentions, with singular rudeness to me, since my return—but she is mad; and I suppose the birth of the Prince at Rome will send her to Bedlam. Adieu! The accounts from Rome continue good.

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## LETTER CCXLVIII.

March 22, 1776.

I HAVE been so long confined, as I am still, that with a dearth of public events, I have been little disposed to write. My gouts, as they never attack my head or stomach, are not alarming. One believes they protract one's life, but they certainly undermine its vigour and its comforts. They reckon this winter unfavourable to that disorder, and I certainly have seen several co-patients who complain of the slowness of their recovery. My common sense tells me, that repeated attacks and increasing years must diminish the powers of recovery. If my companions are more sanguine, they flatter themselves, or say they do.

We know nothing new from America, since the general belief that the attempt on Quebec has failed by the death of Montgomery, who was not so fortunate as Wolfe, to die a conqueror, though very

near being so. No authentic accounts are come from thence. In truth, the want of communication, but to the Government, bolstered up by an infinitude of lies, renders everything one hears problematic. However, had the Ministers any good news, they would be eager enough to divulge it. The season is far advanced, yet their expeditions are much behindhand, and the troops that do go, will arrive during the dangerous heats. Indeed, I do not think the general language is so prophetic of certain success as it was three months ago, and people seem to grow much more clear of the unpromising aspect of affairs than they were.

What else can I tell you? That dissipation and gaming continue to stride before the war. Yes, verily. A new club is opened in St. James's-street, that piques itself on surpassing all its predecessors. But this is almost common-place. The Duke of Wirtemberg, who has wasted revenues enough to be worthy to be of it, is here, but *here* is no phenomenon.

"A senator of Rome, while Rome survives,"

can continue to waste as much in one evening as a German prince in an opera for a season. But it is the nation that is really gaming deep—we have set twelve provinces on the cast of a die. The Duke of Chartres,* they say, is coming to the University of Newmarket. Different philosophers, in different ages, visit different nations for different kinds of lore. Our crocodiles are not the same with those of Egypt.

* Afterwards the notorious Duke of Orleans.

The Duke and Duchess seem much pleased with Rome. I hope their villa is not within the precincts of the malaria.

I did hear the report of the separation of the Cowpers, but not knowing them, never thought about them. To tell you the truth, the Earl,* I conclude is a madman; therefore, I wonder he does *not* come home. Our Countess,† I am told, has bought an estate; is it in Tuscany or Naples?

Everybody is on the quest for tickets for the Duchess of Kingston's trial. I am persuaded her impudence will operate in some singular manner. Probably she will appear in weeds with a train to reach across Westminster Hall, with mourning Maids of Honour to support her when she swoons at her dear Duke's name, and in a black veil to conceal her not blushing. To this farce, novel and curious as it will be, I shall not go. I think cripples have no business in crowds, but at the Pool of Bethesda; and to be sure, this is no angel that troubles the waters.

I have nothing to add but an excellent *bon mot* of Wilkes' yesterday, on Lord George Germaine. The former had moved for a more equal representation, from the natural objection to the small boroughs. Two of them, indeed, he owned, had the merit of sending two great Ministers; Banbury, which chooses Lord North; and East Grinstead, that furnishes an heroic Secretary of State, who might conquer America,

* Earl Cowper. † The Countess of Orford.

though, he believed, it would not be in *Germany.** Adieu!

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LETTER CCXLIX.

Arlington Street, April 17, 1776.

I OPENED your letter of the 2nd with trembling, for the Duchess of Gloucester had told me, with great concern, the danger of Lady Lucy.† As she was still alive, and your nephew thought her in less danger, I will venture to hope she is safe, because I wish it so much for all your sakes; but I shall be very impatient for another letter, and to hear you yourself are better.

You may think of America, if you please; but we think and talk but of one subject, the solemn comedy that is acting in Westminster Hall. Deep wagers had been laid that the Duchess-Countess‡ would decamp before her trial. This, with a million of other stories, have been so spread, that I am determined to believe no one fact but what I shall read in the printed trial; for at it I have not been, though curious enough about so august a mummery, and so original a culprit; but I am too little recovered to encounter crowds.

The scene opened on Wednesday with all its pomp,

* Alluding to the battle of Minden, where Lord George Germaine was disgraced for not leading up the Blues. Lord Chatham boasted of having conquered America in Germany.

† Lady Lucy Noel, wife of Sir Horace Mann, the younger.

‡ Elizabeth Chudleigh, Countess of Bristol, married, during the Earl's life, to the last Duke of Kingston.

and had drawn hither even a Countess Castiglione, from Milan. The doubly noble prisoner went through her part with universal admiration. Instead of her usual ostentatious folly, and clumsy pretensions to cunning, all her conduct was decent, and even seemed natural. Her dress was entirely black and plain; her attendants not too numerous, her dismay at first perfectly unaffected. A few tears balanced cheerfulness enough; and her presence of mind and attention never deserted her. This rational behaviour, and the pleadings of her four counsel, who contended for the finality of the Ecclesiastical Court's sentence against a second trial, carried her triumphantly through the first day, and turned the stream much in her favour.

Yesterday was less propitious. The Attorney and Solicitor-Generals, and Dunning, refuted the Duchess's council, made a very contrary impression, and seem to have unhinged some of her firmness. She was blooded as soon as she retired, fell into a great passion of tears, and is, or affects to be, very ill. However, the Lords have given her and themselves a respite of two days. On Friday the opinion of the Judges is to be asked on her plea against a second trial, which, it is not doubted, will be overruled. All the future is uncertainty; whether she will be sent back to the Ecclesiastical Court, or whether the Lords will proceed to trial—either of which would produce deep probing into her history; or whether, to avoid either, she will not plead guilty, as soon as the Eccle-

siastical Court's decisive jurisdiction is set aside. In fact, this is as much the trial of the Ecclesiastical Court as of the prisoner; and may, at least ought to, produce a reform of that Popish tribunal. The Earl of Bristol* does not stand in a fairer predicament; and is not the whole burlesque, when, except the foreigners, there could not be one person in the Hall who was not as much convinced of the bigamy as of their own existence? But the world can make *laws* against crimes, till nobody knows whether there is any crime which may not be committed *legally*.

I now submit to recall my thoughts to America, for the sake of you Italians and little States, who do not know how superior fashion is in a great nation to national interests. You need not be too impatient for events. The army, that was to overrun the Atlantic continent, is not half set out yet; but it will be time enough to go into winter quarters. What we have heard lately thence is not very promising. The Congress, that was said to be squabbling, seems to act with harmony and spirit; and Quebec is not thought to be so safe as it was a month ago. However, that is the business of the Ministers; nobody else troubles his head about the matter. Few people knew much of America before; and now that all communication is cut off, and the Administration does not think itself bound to chant its own disappointments,

* Augustus John Hervey, Earl of Bristol. He had never avowed his marriage with Miss Chudleigh, and was supposed to have connived for a sum of money at her marrying the Duke.

or the praises of the enemy, we forget it as much as if Columbus had not routed it out of the ocean.

Who thought of Mrs. Pitt* rising again at Pisa? I was told she was in Provence, and imagined her on her return. But who can calculate the motions of such eccentric heads as the English? My dear countrymen and women are—very sensible.

I return to poor Lady Lucy and you and your nephew. How I wish you all at ease about her! Pray, too, be assured, I acquiesce in all you say on your own return, though grieved at your resolution, and more so at the necessity you find in adhering to it. It is not my disposition to prefer my own pleasures to the welfare of my friends. Your return might have opened a warm channel of affection, which above thirty years could not freeze; but I am sure you know my steadiness too well to suspect me of cooling to you, because we are both grown too old to meet again. I wished that meeting, as a luxury beyond what old age often tastes; but I am too well prepared for parting with everything, to be ill-humouredly chagrined because one vision fails. Visions are the consolation of life; it is wise to indulge them, unless one builds on them as realities. Our dreams are almost at an end! Mine are mixed with pain; yet I think it does not make me peevish. I accept with thankfulness every hour in which I do not suffer. I am not at all impatient for the moment that will terminate both anguish and cheerfulness, and I en-

* Mrs. Anne Pitt, sister of William Earl of Chatham.

deavour to form my mind to resigning the first with gratitude, and the latter with easy submission. Adieu!

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LETTER CCL.

Arlington Street, April 24, 1776.

I WRITE again so soon, because I owe you the sequel of the trial. If the Pope expects his Duchess back, he must create her one, for her peers have reduced her to a Countess. Her folly and obstinacy now appear in their full vigour—at least her faith in the Ecclesiastical Court, trusting to the infallibility of which, she provoked this trial, in the face of every sort of detection. A living witness of the first marriage, a register of it fabricated long afterwards by herself, the widow of the clergyman who married her, many confidants to whom she had trusted the secret, and even Hawkins the surgeon, privy to the birth of her child, appeared against her. The Lords were tender, and would not probe the earl's collusion; but the Ecclesiastical Court, who so readily accepted their juggle, and sanctified the second match, were brought to shame—they care not, if no reformation follows. The Duchess, who could produce nothing else of consequence in her favour, tried the powers of oratory, and made a long oration, in which she cited the protection of her late Mistress.* Her council would have curtailed this

* Miss Chudleigh had been Maid of Honour to the Princess Dowager of Wales, and remained so long after she was married to Mr. Hervey, but the marriage was not owned. As she married the Duke of Kingston,

harangue, but she told them they might be good lawyers, but did not understand speaking to the passions. She concluded her rhetoric with a fit, and the trial with rage, when convicted of the bigamy. The Attorney-General laboured to have her burnt in the hand, but the Judges were hustled into an opinion against it, and it was waved. So all this complication of knavery receives no punishment, but the loss of the duchy; unless the civil courts below are more severe than the supreme tribunal; and thither her antagonists intend to resort. The earl's family have talked loudly of a divorce; but if it is true that he has given her a bond of thirty thousand pounds not to molest her, and that this bond is in Lord Barrington's hands, either she will recriminate, and collusion proved prevents a divorce; or his silence will speak the collusion. I am heartily tired of this farce, having heard of nothing else this fortnight. Happily, in this giant town one is not long troubled with stale events. As I have heard no more from you of Lady Lucy, I flatter myself that all danger is over. I shall like to have it confirmed.

There is a report to-day that Spain has made free with Jamaica, and taken it. I do not believe it; but it is certain that America furnishes Administration with no good news. Fifteen thousand of the destined troops are not yet sailed thither.

I have just met with your name in a printed book,

without being a widow, the enigmatic epitaph of *Ælia Lælia Crispus, nec Virgo, nec Mulier, nec Vidua, sed Omnia,* was applied to her by the author of these letters.

in which your politeness is celebrated. It is called "Letters from Italy, by an Englishwoman." This is a Mrs. Miller, whom perhaps you recollect. Ten years ago I knew her and her husband, the faithful companion of her travels, at Bath, near which they have a small house and garden in a beautiful spot called Bath-Easton. They were mighty civil simple people, living with her mother, Mrs. Riggs, a rough kind of English humourist. They ran out their fortune, and all went to France to repair it. In France the mother was left with the grandchildren, while the fond pair resorted to Italy. Thence they returned, *her* head turned with France and *bouts-rimés*; *his*, with *virtù*. They have instituted a poetic academy at Bath-Easton, give out subjects, and distribute prizes; publish the prize verses, and make themselves completely ridiculous; which is a pity, as they are good-natured well-meaning people. The poor Arcadian patroness does not spell one word of French or Italian right through her three volumes of Travels. I wonder we have never had our friend Lady Pomfret's, as she had something now and then like sense, they would have been still more absurd. Adieu!

P.S. I must add an anecdote of the Duchess-countess that I heard last night. On some altercation between her and Sir Francis Molyneux, Black Rod, under whose custody she was in her own house, she carried him into another room, and showed him a hole in the ceiling or wainscot made by a pistol-ball. I have heard formerly that she used to terrify the Duke of Kingston

in that manner, with threatening to murder him or herself. I think they favoured her age as much as her person on her trial, for they have made her but fifty. She must be fifty-five or six. She and her brother were my play-fellows, when we lived at Chelsea, and her father was Deputy-Governor of the College. I am fifty-nine almost, and boys and girls do not play together, unless near of an age, much less before one of them is born. I believe you remember them at Chelsea as well as I; and what a heroine her mother was —at least I have not forgotten this story of the latter. She was coming home late at night, with two of the old pensioners as patrol, walking behind the coach. She was asleep, and was awakened by three foot-pads, one of whom held a pistol at her breast. She cooly put her head out of the other window, and said, fire! The patrol fired, and shot the robber. The daughter does not degenerate.

Second P.S. There is not a word of truth in the report about Jamaica; such endless lies are coined every day, that one is afraid of writing a word of news before it is musty with age.

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## LETTER CCLI.

Strawberry Hill, May 17, 1776.

As I knew no more than the newspapers would tell you, I did not announce to you the retreat of the King's army from Boston. Great pains were taken,

and no wonder, to soften this disgrace. Such arts may serve a moment, but the truth emerges, unless some advantage compensates — and as yet, that is neither the case, nor seems likely to be. What is or will be the fate of General Howe or his army cannot be known for some time — I doubt his prospect is not fair. Many think Quebec itself is gone, and that the Ministry knew it. The American war begins to lose its popularity.

I saw in the papers to-day that your younger* sister is dead. I tell it you without ceremony : I believe you never was acquainted with her ; nor was I. By the long interval, I trust Lady Lucy is quite out of danger, and your nephew at ease about her.

We swarm with new Peers and Peeresses, English, Scotch, and Irish ; you will see the two former in the gazette, the last are known, but not yet declared. We have coveys of foreigners too, particularly French : I have given two dinners here lately to the latter.

Is it not shameful to send such a note as this so far ? If I would have recourse to little arts, I might have transcribed the list of peerages, which would have reached to the bottom of the page—but a bede-roll of unknown names would only tire you. It has long been a settled point that we cannot correspond about obscure persons, as many of these are. You are a stranger to common actors : like heroic trage-

* The two younger sisters of Sir Horace Mann were married to two gentlemen of the name of Foote, in Kent.

dies we can deal only in very great personages. Even newspapers have the advantage of me, for they may detail births, deaths, and marriages. The summer will probably not be so barren as that season generally is, though the great campaign will scarcely begin before August; yet Quebec and Halifax must be fruitful of something, and perhaps Virginia and New York — but you are no vulture, and do not desire to banquet on battles. In one word, my letters written for your information, must depend on events; and when they are short, or none, you will excuse it; and now that half my letter has been an apology, it is best to put an end to it.

May 18th.

Your letter of the 4th is this moment arrived, with others from France, and would enable me to cancel my last paragraphs. I am heartily sorry for your accounts of Lady Lucy, but cannot believe in the contagion of consumptions, especially in a better climate. Were it catching, it would be still more common here than it is. The child may indeed be affected, as partaking of the mother's constitution; but I who have little faith in physicians, have none at all in those of Italy, where physic is as much an old woman as religion.

As soon as I go to town, I will enquire into the etiquette of your proxyhood.* The King gives plate to his god-children; you, I dare to say, are to give nothing, and indubitably have no particular dress.

* Sir Horace was to stand godfather for the King to a child of Earl Cowper.

Here I think the lord or lady who represents, rides backwards and alone in a royal coach; as your own is a representative of the King's, no doubt it will do—but you shall know in time.

A great revolution has happened in France. Monsieur de Maurepas and Vergennes, either not to burn their own fingers, or to involve Turgot (of whom the former was grown jealous) and Malesherbes in a scrape, set the latter on representing to the Queen that she ought to abandon M. de Guisnes. Her Majesty, and consequently the public, laughed at him. He, who hated his place, asked to resign, and it was at last granted. But to-day's letters add, that Turgot is also dismissed, and the King has thanked M. de Guisnes for his services and made him a *Duc à brevet.* This implies what I have said these six months, that a woman who is always in the society of a man, however unmanly and unwomanly, would prevail at last, if he passed no moments in the society of any other woman. Malesherbes is the best of men, but void of all ambition. Turgot has the ambition of reforming the nation, and blessing the people; is intrepid, indifferent to fortune, and determined to carry his points, or fall. Such men, friends of human kind, could not think of war, however fair the opportunity we offered to them. Poor France, and poor England! Choiseul, if not Choiseul, some Louvois or other, will rise out of this fall of patriot philosophers; and then we shall be forced to see the wisdom of the stamp-act, and of persisting in taxing America! Somebody rings at

the gate, but I have said enough to furnish you with reflections. Monsieur de Noailles is named ambassador hither, but that does not comfort me.

May 20.

I saw Lady Holderness* to-night and consulted her, and found that I had been right in all my directions. *You* can give nothing unless you are ordered: and as you cannot possibly go in one of the King's coaches, need not ride backwards in your own. I have neither room, nor more to say if I had.

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## LETTER CCLII.

Strawberry Hill, May 27, 1776.

This fatal year puts to the proof the nerves of my friendship! I was disappointed of seeing you when I had set my heart on it,—and now I have lost Mr. Chute!† It is a heavy blow; but such strokes reconcile one's-self to parting with this pretty vision, life! What is it, when one has no longer those to whom one speaks as confidentially as to one's own soul? Old friends are the great blessing of one's latter years—half a word conveys one's meaning. They have memory of the same events, and have the same mode of thinking. Mr. Chute and I agreed invariably in our principles; he was my counsel in my affairs, was my oracle in taste, the standard to whom I submitted

* One of the Ladies of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte.

† John Chute, Esq., of the Vine in Hampshire; the last of the male line.

my trifles, and the genius that presided over poor Strawberry! His sense decided me in everything; his wit and quickness illuminated everything. I saw him oftener than any man; to him in every difficulty I had recourse, and him I loved to have here, as our friendship was so entire, and we knew one another so entirely, that he alone never was the least constraint to me. We passed many hours together without saying a syllable to each other—for we were both above ceremony. I left him without excusing myself, read or wrote before him, as if he were not present. Alas! alas! and how *self* presides even in our grief! I am lamenting myself, not him!—no, I am lamenting my other self. Half is gone; the other remains solitary. Age and sense will make me bear my affliction with submission and composure—but for ever—that little *for ever* that remains, I shall miss him. My first thought will always be, *I will go talk to Mr. Chute on this,*—the second, *alas! I cannot;*—and therefore judge how my life is poisoned! I shall only seem to be staying behind one who is set out a little before me.

Mr. Chute for these last two or three years was much broken by his long and repeated shocks of gout, yet was amazingly well, considering that he had suffered by it from twenty to seventy-three! Still as he never had had it in his head or stomach, I never was alarmed till last summer, when he had a low lingering fever, and sickness and pain in his breast, with returns of an excessive palpitation at his heart, which formerly much alarmed me, but of which he had been free for

some years. He got better and went to the Bath, which gave him the gout, and here turned quite well; so well, that, alarmed at our situation, he thought of drawing some money out of the Stocks and buying an annuity, saying, that he thought his life as good as any man's for five years. I am sure I thought so too. On Thursday last, being surprised at his not calling on me for three days, which was unusual, I went to him and was told that he was very ill. I found him in bed; he had so violent a pain in his breast that two days before he had sent for Dr. Thomas, whom he had consulted in the summer, though of all men the most averse to physicians. Thomas had given him an hundred drops of laudanum and asafœtida. Mr. Chute said, *it is not the gout; I have had my palpitation, and fear it is something of a polypus.* Thus, perfectly reasonable, though with much more indifference than he who was all spirit and eagerness used to have, I attributed it to the laudanum, and indeed he desired me to leave him, as he was heavy, and wanted to sleep. He dozed all that evening, and had no return of pain. On Friday morning, still without pain. I saw him again. He had taken more asafœtida, but no more laudanum; yet, when I said, I trusted the pain was gone, he said, *I do not know; the effects of the laudanum are not yet gone.* I said, I thought that impossible; that the pain would have surmounted the laudanum by that time, if the pain were not removed. I was coming hither on business, and charged his valet to send for me if the pain returned. On Saturday morn-

ing I rejoiced at not receiving even a letter by the post, and concluded all was well. This dream of satisfaction lasted all that day and Saturday night. I knew he would take no more laudanum, unless the pain returned, and that then I should be advertised. But, oh, unhappy! Yesterday, just as I had breakfasted, and was in the garden, I heard the bell at the gate ring, and wondered, as it was but ten o'clock, who could come to me so early. I went to see, and met my valet-de-chambre, with a letter in his hand, who said, *Oh, sir, Mr. Chute is dead!* In a word, he had continued quite easy till three that morning, when he said, *Who is in the room?* His own valet replied, *I, sir!* and, going to the bed, found him very ill, ran to call help, and, returning as quickly as possible, saw him dead! It was certainly a polypus; his side immediately grew black as ink. A charming death for him, dearest friend! And why should I lament? His eyes, always short-sighted, were grown dimmer, his hearing was grown imperfect, his hands were all chalkstones and of little use, his feet very lame—yet how not lament? The vigour of his mind was strong as ever; his power of reasoning clear as demonstration; his rapid wit astonishing as at forty, about which time you and I knew him first. Even the impetuosity of his temper was not abated, and all his humane virtues had but increased with his age. He was grown sick of the world; saw very, very few persons; submitted with unparalleled patience to all his sufferings; and, in five-and-thirty years, I never once saw or heard him

complain of them, nor, passionate as he was, knew him fretful. His impatience seemed to proceed from his vast sense, not from his temper: he saw everything so clearly and immediately, that he could not bear a momentary contradiction from folly or defective reasoning. Sudden contempt broke out, particularly on politics, which, having been fixed in him by a most sensible father, and matured by deep reflection, were rooted in his inmost soul. His truth, integrity, honour, spirit, and abhorrence of all dirt, confirmed his contempt; and even I, who am pretty warm and steady, was often forced to break off politics with him, so impossible was it to be zealous enough to content him when I most agreed with him. Nay, if I disputed with him, I learnt something from him, and always saw truth in a stronger and more summary light.

His possession of the quintessence of argument reduced it at once into axioms, and the clearness of his ideas struck out flashes of the brightest wit. He saw so suddenly and so far, that, as Mr. Bentley said of him long ago, *his wit strikes the more you analyze it, and more than at first hearing; he jumps over two or three intermediate ideas, and couples the first with the third or fourth.* Don't wonder I pour out my heart to you; you knew him, and know how faithfully true all I say of him. My loss is most irreparable. To me he was the most faithful and secure of friends, and a delightful companion. I shall not seek to replace him. Can I love any that are old, more than I have had reason for loving them?

and is it possible to love younger, as one loved an habitual old friend of thirty-five years' standing? I have young relations that may grow upon me, for my nature is affectionate, but can they grow *old* friends? My age forbids that. Still less can they grow companions. Is it friendship to explain half one says? One must relate the history of one's memory and ideas; and what is that to the young, but old stories? No, my dear sir, *you* could be that resource, but I must not think of it—I must not be selfish. I must do what I ought to do, while I remain here; pass my time as amusingly as I can; enjoy the friends I have left; drink my grief in silence—it is too sincere for parade; and what cares the world about my private sensations? Or what has an old man to do but to be forgotten; and to remember how soon he will be so? Forgive this expansion of my heart; it was necessary to me. I will not often mention poor Mr. Chute even to you. His loss is engraven on my soul, and real grief does not seek for applause. Could the world's plaudit comfort me, sit with me, hear me, advise me? Did it know Mr. Chute's worth as well as I did? Does it love me as well? When it does, I will beg its compassion. I have done, and will now show you that I am master of myself, and remember *you*, and consider that at this distance of time you cannot feel what I do, and must be anxious about public affairs. If I indulged my own feelings, I should forswear thinking of the public. *He* is gone to whom I ran with every scrap of news I heard; but I promised to

forget myself: I will go take a walk, shed a tear, and return to you more composed.

I take up my pen again, and fear my last sentences have made you expect some news. I know none; except that I think the intoxication of this country begins to wear off. The stocks have taken the alarm, and the Ministers have felt it some time. The change in the French councils has changed the spirits of ours. I believe almost any peace would be welcome to them. I doubt the Americans have experienced too much of our inability to hurt them; and as I have no great faith in virtue tempted by power, I expect that the American leaders having too fair a field before them, will not easily part with dictatorships and consulships to retire to their private ploughs. Oh! Madness, to have squandered away such an empire! Now we tremble at France, which America enabled us to resist. How naturally our ideas hang on our country, even when all future ages are the same to one who is going to leave it! What will it be to me a few years hence, whether England shrinks back to its little insular insignificance under George the Third or George the Tenth? Yet, as our minds seldom roam into the future affairs of the world, we rejoice or grieve over the state of our country according to the condition in which we leave it at our departure. Else why do people nurse visions of pride about their own descendants? How long do the greatest and most ancient families last? What a speck in rolling ages does the longest genealogy oc-

cupy!—but I will moralize no more. To-day's misfortune has given a wise cast to my mind. Spirits and folly will have their turn again, and perhaps are as wise. To act with common sense according to the moment, is the best wisdom I know; and the best philosophy, to do one's duties, take the world as it comes, submit respectfully to one's lot, bless the Goodness that has given so much happiness with it, whatever it is, and despise affectation, which only makes our weakness more contemptible, by showing we know that we are not what we wish to appear. Adieu!

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LETTER CCLIII.

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1776.

My letters grow scarce or multiply according as the season is fruitful of events or not. These last days have been very prolific. The freshest incidents, and those that will interest you the most, are from America, and have raised the hopes that a fortnight ago were exceedingly desponding. The provincials have again attempted to storm Quebec, and been repulsed with great loss by the conduct and bravery of Carleton,* who, Mr. Conway has all along said, would prove himself a very able general. Succours have since arrived in the town. The remarkable General

* Afterwards Sir Guy Carelton, Knight of the Bath, and Commander at New York till the peace.

Lee,* is taken prisoner by General Clinton, in Carolina; as the Americans say, by his own treachery: however, though the fact is not doubted, as it comes from themselves, the story is very dark. General Howe is arrived safely at Halifax, some say, having been repulsed at New York. The American Admiral Hopkins, with three or four ships has been worsted and disgraced by a single frigate. Your Bible, the Gazette, will tell you more particulars, I suppose, for I have not yet seen it; and the Alamains of the Court have given Howe a victory, and Hopkins chains, which I do not believe will appear in that Chronicle; however, you may certainly sing some Te Deums in your own chapel.

These triumphs have come on the back of a very singular revolution which has happened in the Penetralia, and made very great noise. Yesterday se'nnight it was declared that the Bishop of Chester† and Mr. Jackson, preceptor and sub-preceptor to the Prince of Wales, were dismissed, and that Lord Holderness‡ and Mr. Smelt,§ governor and sub-governor, had resigned their posts; Lord Bruce‖ and Dr. Hurd,¶ Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, being named their successors, and the former declared Earl of Ailesbury. No reason, whatever, was assigned for so total a change, which did not allay the astonish-

* This did not prove true at that time, though it did happen afterwards.
† Dr. Markham, afterwards Archbishop of York.
‡ Robert Darcy, last Earl of Holderness. § Leonard Smelt, Esq.
‖ Bruce Brudenel Bruce, youngest brother of the Earl of Cardigan.
¶ Dr. Hurd was afterwards Bishop of Worcester.

ment. It is now known that on Lord Holderness's return from the south of France, he found a great alienation from him in the minds of his royal pupils, * which he attributed to Jackson. This grew so bad, that after vainly complaining of Jackson, and as vainly having obtained reproof, the Bishop, who seemed to be the instigator of the manœuvre and subsequent *disobedience*, was turned out with his instrument, and the Earl saw it hopeless to try to recover his authority. Mr. Smelt, promoted by him, would not survive him. I make no comments—your own mind will suggest alarming reflections on the prospect of a scene that has twice happened since the family came over.

What will you say, if out of this change of decoration, another has happened already; yes, already! Lord Bruce, who had taken seisin, retired abruptly into the country, without asking or taking leave. On enquiry where he was and when he would return, his colleague said he had no thoughts of returning. It is said that his mad wife, Mr. Hoare's daughter, had written a piteous letter, promising she should die if deprived of her dear Lord; but must not her dear lord be as frantic, to quit in so indecent a manner? Have not I told you long, that we are all mad? Whence do you think the successor is chosen? From the self-same family. It is the Duke of Montagu.†

* The Prince of Wales, and Prince Frederick, Bishop of Osnaburgh, afterwards Duke of York.

† George Brudenel, Earl of Cardigan and Duke of Montagu.

Here is a short letter, which with any address I might have made a folio; but I content myself with giving you the quintessence of events. My own mind loses every year the roots that hold it to the world. There is little pleasure in thinking, when one has no longer those to whom and with whom one loved to communicate reflections. One's own country becomes another country when the *dramatis personæ* are totally changed. Young princes and their favourites only give one a peep into the history of the future world, as if a printer brought one the wet sheets of a book that is to be published after one's death. If one outlives one's friends, it is being but a Strulbrug. Adieu!

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## LETTER CCLIV.

Strawberry Hill, July 16, 1776.

EVERY day may produce news from America, but nothing has come since my last. I wish the probability of news may not be opened at a new war-office. The vast preparations in France, exacted as they pretend by Spain, and not much more comfortable for that, either announce war, may beget it, or at least can easily be blown into a flame. Why we should tempt it, and yet not expect it, is a problem not soluble by my old-fashioned head.

The Duchess of Bristol* is returned—to avoid out-

* The Duchess of Kingston.

lawry. The Earl, whom she has made a dowager, talks, and seems to act resolution of being divorced; and the Ecclesiastical Court, affects to be ashamed, and thunders against the Duchess. In the mean time, the Meadowses* prosecute the Earl for the whole receipt of the Kingston estate, as her Grace is his Countess. People cry out, that the House of Lords cannot grant a divorce after such symptoms of collusion. I beg their pardons; I do not know what the House of Lords cannot do.

Will you take this for a letter? It will, at least, do to keep a place for its predecessor, which was more portly, if not more substantial. If I would stoop to artifice, I could insert a list of so many new Irish Lords, that there would be no room to sign my name. But what would you care for a bede-roll of mushrooms, half of whom, like your procession-nobility at Florence,† will not be gentlemen under a generation or two? They are like the Lord Bateman, whom George I. made an Irish peer, to avoid making him a Knight of the Bath; for, said he, "I can make him a lord, but I cannot make him a gentleman." Nay, all these earls and barons may be well born for aught I know, but their very number makes them a mob—they are thirty.

What is become of Mrs. Anne Pitt? Lady Lucy Mann, I trust, was in less danger than her husband apprehended. I have a high opinion of the sea, and am

* Nephews of the Duke of Kingston by his only sister, Lady Frances Pierpoint, wife of Mr. Meadows, second son of Sir Philip.

† Citizens ennobled at Florence are allowed to rank as nobles only at processions, till the third generation.

going to try its air myself, for I have not recovered my feet quite yet, and always found singular benefit from sea-breezes, which are all I shall try now, and on shore. One ought to try, though one must not imagine that strength is to return, when one is no boy, as it used to do. I have no such impertinent presumption, and always submit with profound deference to whatever penalties years impose, or that tyrant, the gout. Age has still its comforts. They who disdain them, and insist upon pleasures, do not understand their own interest. The most grievous part of old age is the loss of old friends: they have no succedaneum. Adieu!

17th.

The Duchess of Newcastle* died this morning, aged seventy-five. She was perfectly well on Monday night, when she went to bed, was seized between two and three with an apoplexy and total loss of sense, and expired at eleven to-day. I just mention deaths of those you remember. To myself I seem Methuselah, for I can scarcely reckon twenty of those who formed *the world* when I came into it; but, indeed, as my father was Minister, I came into it at five years old. Sometimes, I think this my second life, so totally is everything changed.

I did flatter myself with being diverted at your surprise from so general an alteration of persons, objects, manners, as you would have found; but there is an end of all that pleasing vision! I remember

* Lady Henrietta Godolphin, eldest daughter of the second Earl of Godolphin, by Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough.

when my father went out of place, and was to return visits, which ministers are excused from doing, he could not guess where he was, finding himself in so many new streets and squares. This was thirty years ago. They have been building ever since, and one would think had imported two or three capitals. London could put Florence into its fob-pocket; but as they build so slightly, if they did not rebuild, it would be just the reverse of Rome, a vast circumference of city surrounding an area of ruins. As its present progress is chiefly north, and Southwark marches south, the metropolis promises to be as broad as long. Rows of houses shoot out every way like a polypus; and, so great is the rage of building everywhere, that, if I stay here a fortnight, without going to town, I look about to see if no new house is built since I went last. America and France must tell us how long this exuberance of opulence is to last! The East Indies, I believe, will not contribute to it much longer. Babylon and Memphis and Rome, probably, stared at their own downfall. Empires did not use to philosophise, nor thought much but of themselves. Such revolutions are better known now, and we ought to expect them—I do not say we do. This little island will be ridiculously proud some ages hence of its former brave days, and swear its capital was once as big again as Paris, or—what is to be the name of the city that will then give laws to Europe?—perhaps New York or Philadelphia.

## LETTER CCLV.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 11, 1776.

I HAVE so little to tell you, though, perhaps, at the eve of so much, that I shall, I think, only begin this letter to show you the constancy of my attention, but not send it till it is fuller.

You have seen by the public newspapers, that General Carleton has driven the provincials out of all Canada. It is well he fights better than he writes! General Conway has constantly said that he would do great service. The provincials revenge themselves on our ships, took nine Jamaica-men at once, and have just taken two transports with troops; besides half or three quarters starving our West India Islands. General Howe has left Halifax since the beginning of June, on an expedition. Nearly a fortnight ago he was heard of off New York, and great anxiety was afloat to know farther. Yesterday came letters that he had landed on an island near, without molestation, but learnt that the opposite coast was covered with an hundred cannon, behind which lay a strong army entrenched up to their eyes. This does not diminish the anxiety for the event. His brother the peer had not joined him; not that there are appearances promising negotiation. The Congress has declared all the provinces independent, has condemned the Mayor of New York to be hanged for corresponding with their enemies, and have seized Franklin, not the famous doctor, but one of the King's governors. I hope this savage

kind of war will not proceed; but they seem to be very determined, and that makes the prospect very melancholy.

I have been much alarmed lately about General Conway, who, by a sudden cold, had something of a paralytic stroke in the face; but as it did not affect his speech or health, and is almost disappeared, I am much easier. He is uneasy himself, with reason, about his daughter. Her husband * and his two brothers have contracted a debt—one can scarcely expect to be believed out of England—of seventy thousand pounds! Who but must think himself happy to marry a daughter with only ten thousand pounds to a young man with five thousand pounds a-year rent-charge in present, and twenty-two thousand a-year settled? And yet this daughter at present is ruined! Her behaviour is such as her father's would be; she does not only not complain, but desires her very own jewels may be sold. The young men of this age seem to have made a law amongst themselves for declaring their fathers superannuated at fifty, and then dispose of the estates, as if already their own.

How culpable to society was Lord Holland † for setting an example of paying such enormous, such gigantic debts! Can you believe that Lord Foley's ‡ two sons have borrowed money so extravagantly, that the interest they have contracted to pay, amounts to eighteen

* John Damer, eldest son of Joseph Lord Milton, married Anne, only child of General Henry Seymour Conway.

† Henry Fox, first Lord Holland.

‡ Thomas and Edward, sons of the first Lord Foley of that line.

thousand pounds a-year? I write the sum at length, lest you should think I have mistaken, and set down two or three figures too much. The Legislature sits quiet, and says it cannot put a stop to such outrageous doings; but thus is it punished for winking at the plunder of the Indies, which cannot suffice. Our Jews and usurers continue to lounge at home, and commit as much rapine as Lord Clive!

Wednesday, 14th.

As I doubt whether we shall hear any considerable news soon, I have determined to send away this letter, lest it should be superannuated. The Gazette has already got the start of it, and told you all it pretended to tell. In truth, my letters are little more than companions of the newspapers, or at best evidences for their veracity, which *they* want. It is incredible how both sides lie about the American war. Even that laconic personage the Gazette has been known to fib, and always takes care not to tell a syllable of bad news. I live here alone, and never hear any but with all the world. Whenever this war shall end, I believe it will be very new; for except two or three great facts, I quesiton whether we, the public, know anything of the matter.

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## LETTER CCLVI.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 20, 1776.

You will have concluded, on the sight of another letter so soon, that you are to hear of a battle in Ame-

rica. Not so, though you are going to hear a dismal story, and, which is worse, relative to friends of mine. Indeed the newspapers will have told it to you already, and you have known the principal actor, Mr. Damer, Lord Milton's eldest son, and who married General Conway's only daughter. I think I told you in my last that he and his two brothers most unexpectedly notified to their father that they owed above seventy thousand pounds. The proud lord, for once in the right, refused to pay the debt, or see them. The two eldest were to retire to France, and Mrs. Damer was to accompany them, without a murmur, and with the approbation, though to the great grief, of Mr. Conway and Lady Ailesbury. She was, luckily, gone to take her leave of them, and to return to town last Friday morning. On Thursday, Mr. Damer supped at the Bedford-arms in Covent Garden, with four common women, a blind fidler, and no other man. At three in the morning he dismissed his seraglio, bidding each receive her guinea at the bar, and ordering Orpheus to come up again in half-an-hour. When he returned, he found a dead silence, and smelt gunpowder. He called, the master of the house came up, and found Mr. Damer sitting in his chair, dead, with a pistol by him, and another in his pocket. The ball had not gone through his head, nor made any report. On the table lay a scrap of paper with these words, " The people of the house are not to blame for what has happened, which was my own act." This was the sole tribute he paid to justice and decency !

What a catastrophe for a man at thirty-two, heir to two and twenty thousand a-year! We are persuaded lunacy, not distress, was the sole cause of his fate. He has often, and even at supper that night, hinted at such an exploit—the very reason why one should not expect it. His brothers have gamed—he never did. He was grave, cool, reasonable, and reserved; but passed his life as he died, with troops of women and the blind fidler—an odd companion in such scenes! One good springs out of this evil, the leeches, the Jews and extortioners, will lose very considerably. Lord Milton, whom anything can petrify and nothing soften, will not only not see his remaining sons, but wrecks his fury on Mrs. Damer, though she deserves only pity, and shows no resentment. He insists on selling her jewels, which are magnificent, for discharge of just debts. This is all the hurt he can do her; she must have her jointure of 2500*l.* a-year.

We have no end of these examples of extravagance. There is a Lord Coleraine and his two brothers, who have equalled the Damers, and almost the Foxes and Foleys. Their father, who died about two years ago, was apprised of their proceedings, and left all he could, 1600*l.* a-year to his wife. The unnatural wretches have wheedled her out of all, and Lady Windsor has taken her into her house for subsistence! Very lately they told her she must come to town on business:—it was to show her to the Jews, and convince them hers was a good life—unless she is starved. You must not suppose that such actions are disapproved, for the se-

cond brother is going * Minister to Brussels, that he may not go to jail, whither he ought to go. I am weary of relating such historics. You shall hear no more of them, for my letters would be the annals of Bedlam. Adieu!

22nd.

Since I wrote my letter, an account is come of the total failure of the expedition under General Clinton, Lord Cornwallis, and Sir Peter Parker, against Charleston. The troops landed on Long Island, and then could not act. The fleet attacked a fort, were repulsed, lost a man-of-war, with a captain, lieutenant, and two hundred men, and Sir Peter Parker they say is wounded in six places. They were, besides, forced to burn a storeship. The provincials are confessed to have behaved remarkably well. This success will not discourage the rest. In what a chaos are we embarked!

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## LETTER CCLVII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1776.

You almost confess by your last that you have a little suspected me of having relaxed my veteran punctuality. I doubt your suspicions will have been augmented, for how can you conceive that at so critical a moment, and with so much reason to expect events, six whole weeks will have intervened to-morrow, since the letters that brought an account of General Howe being landed on Staten Island in the face of New York?

* He did not go.

The disgraceful miscarriage of Charleston has come since—but not a syllable from General Howe—not even that his brother has joined him; nor is it known what is become of Lord Howe. The public are impatient, you may be sure: in the Ministers it is more than impatience. Yet these no-events are all I could have sent you. The despair from hearing nothing does amount to the importance of an article; and when I have told you that, I have said all I know.

Sir William Hamilton is arrived, and I expect he will call on me here in a day or two. I don't know whether he passed through Florence.

You ask, what is become of the Duchess of Kingston? I have just heard of her, having met Lady Harriet Vernon,* who is returned from Paris, and saw her there at the Colisée,† with a hat and feathers like Henri Quatre. She has given orders for a palace to be taken for her in Paris. At Calais she has a guard at her door, having demanded it, on pretence that her enemies aimed at her life. She obtained it, and has detained it to this moment. Her foolish vanity, you see, will never leave her. I think your Lord Cowper is not much wiser—I should not wonder at his retaining the mob, if Florence were a borough town. It would be a sort of poetic justice,‡ if he

* Youngest sister of William Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and Lady of the Bedchamber to Princess Amelia.

† The French Ranelagh.

‡ Lord Cowper from the moment he went to travel, would not return to England, but settled at Florence, and though entreated in the most earnest manner, would not visit his father before the latter's death.

should send his son to England, and the boy should refuse to return to him. I am sorry other climates cannot repair the eccentricities our own climate occasions.

I am inclined to think you will hear good news of Lady Lucy, as she holds out so long. I heartily wish you may.

I shall reserve the rest of my paper, as my letter cannot begin its journey till the 24th, for any news that may happen to arrive in the interim. When I appear remiss, you may be certain I have nothing to tell you. Being so totally idle, it would be unpardonable to be lazy too, when you depend on my correspondence. When it has been so constant above thirty years, it shall not disgrace itself in its old age.

22nd.

The Ministers have heard by a ship which met another ship at sea, that Lord Howe has joined his brother, and that they were preparing to make the attempt on New York. This may be so, and is not improbable; but such round-about intelligence may not be true neither.

Adieu! till there is something to tell you.

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## LETTER CCLVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 13, 1776.

I NEED not tell you what a splendid gazette has already told. As I was here before the account ar-

rived, and heard it but imperfectly, I could not write so soon as the first post would set out with the news. The provincials have certainly not behaved up to the haughtiness with which they rejected all overtures of peace. It is said they were outwitted, deceived by feints, and drawn into ambuscade. *That* does no honour to their generals. Great consequences are expected from this victory. I am too ignorant of war, sieges, and America, to pretend to judge; and really have heard so much from both sides that has not proved true, and at the same time such pains are taken to keep people in the dark, that I have laid it down to myself to believe nothing but what is universally allowed. It is your duty to credit gazettes, and you cannot err while you stick to your Bible. The red riband is to be sent to General Howe, who seems to have acted very sensibly.

I never saw your Duke with the barbarous name —Ostrogothia;* nor am longer curious of sights. For the first summer of my life, I have stayed quietly at home; at least not been thirty miles. It has struck fifty-nine with me: which is an hour for thinking of "the great journey," though not for talking of it: in which there always seems a great deal of affectation or unwillingness. Nay, it is silly, too; for how few can one talk to about one's death, that care about it: if they do, it is unkind. My being is so *isolé* and insignificant, that I shall go out, like a lamp in an illumination that cannot be missed.

* Brother of the King of Sweden.

## LETTER CCLIX.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 1, 1776.

For three weeks you have been expecting accounts from New York: so have we; and so we are still. Nothing was come this morning; but we seem to be on the eve of another interlude, that will be full as serious as the chief piece. Very few days before the Parliament was to meet, nine or ten ships of the line were put into commission; and, on Tuesday, press-warrants were issued, and every appearance spoke war. The first reports were, that Spain was going to attack Portugal; and so it looks still: and, they say, by the obstinacy of the latter.

I do not know how, but the general opinion is, that, though Monsieur de Noailles* is just arrived, our preparations are made at least as much against France, as to support Portugal. Every port in France countenances these apprehensions; and our late success at Long Island does but make it probable that we shall not be suffered quietly to fetch over too many victories. The agent of the Colonies is openly countenanced at Versailles; and it is past a doubt that they are assisted and traded with. I hear this was urged yesterday, in both Houses, by the Opposition; and not denied. The King's speech you will see; and I think it gainsays but very faintly all I tell you. The Opposition made a sort of protest against all the late measures, in a kind of address, that

* The new Ambassador from France.

they would have substituted for that prepared by the Court: not expecting, to be sure, to carry it, but as their declaration. As I am here, I could not learn even these particulars in time to write to you by to-night's post. Indeed, what shall pass at present in Parliament will decide nothing. Parliament has done what, I think, it will never be able to undo; and it must excuse me if I do not honour its wisdom.

What a strange event in France! Monsieur Necker, a Protestant, and actually resident, from Geneva, made one of the Comptrollers of the Finances! What says your neighbour, Madame of Babylon?*—but, poor old soul, she dares say nothing. Marshal Turenne's ghost will die for shame, that, with all his glory, he turned Catholic to make his Court. A little Swiss banker will be above such meanness. No, I never disapproved your de-crowning Count Albany:† it became you: but I certainly have the utmost contempt for the Court of Rome, that denied him a title, of which his family had forfeited all the advantages for *their* cause. I am glad they did; for it shows how insignificant both he and they are. You never did mention the *démêlé* with Lord Cowper; and I could easily excuse it.

I still think Lady Lucy has a good chance of living, by holding out so long. Thank you much for your

* Rome.

† The Pretender. Sir Horace Mann had remonstrated against his being received at Rome as King of England; and the Pope complied.

kindness to Mr. Giles.* I shall go to town on Sunday for a day or two, and if I hear any further news you shall know.

Arlington Street, Nov. 4.

At last the confirmation is come of New York being in possession of General Howe, having been abandoned by the provincials. Three thousand men sallied out of their lines, but were repulsed by three regiments, with little loss of life on either side, but thirteen or fourteen of the King's officers were wounded. Three days after Howe was in the town it was fired by some provincials, and a quarter of it burnt before the flames could be extinguished. Howe is now encamped within four miles of the enemy's lines. I don't know whether he means to attempt to force them, or whether they mean to make their stand now, or draw him up into the country. My opinion is, that if he gains any great advantage, it will but the sooner bring on a war with France, as it is natural to suppose they will not let us ever be quiet masters of America again, nor miss the present favourable opportunity of embarrassing us so considerably. However, I have no great faith in reasonings on future events, and much less on my own reasonings of that sort. When it is so difficult to trace back events to causes, the reverse must be much more fallible.

* A neighbour of Mr. Walpole at Twickenham, by whom he had written to Sir Horace.

## LETTER CCLX.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 24, 1776.

I CANNOT tell you the particulars, as I am here, and have not yet learnt them; but there is another victory, a naval one, over the provincials on the Lake Champlain. They have lost their whole fleet, have burnt Crown Point, and are retired to Ticonderago, where, I think, they are besieged. You will see the particular circumstances in the papers, as soon as I could hear and tell them. General Howe, it is said, finding the lines at King's Bridge too strong, is drawing others between them and New York. Some say he is meditating or executing a diversion; at the same time there is a pretty general opinion that he is negotiating a peace.

You, perhaps, are still more inquisitive about the appearance of war in Europe. If I were an ambassador myself, I could not answer you more unsatisfactorily, which, if I spoke in a character, would be called mysteriously or enigmatically; but my reason is founded, as perhaps it is sometimes in your profession, on ignorance. The outward and visible signs are all martial. Equipment of a fleet, pressing of sailors, and the nomination of an Admiral: so much for Bellona. On the other hand, France says she has no thoughts of war, and our Ministers declare that they believe her. For her amusment, indeed, she makes great naval preparations, and some say, does not frown

on the Americans, nor on their Resident, Silas Deane. *Nous verrons.*

If you should ask what the Opposition says,—I answer, nothing. They have abandoned Parliament, and some are gone into the country, and some to Paris: not to confer with Mr. Deane, but to see horse-races,—of which we have none here!

After so much negative information, I can tell you one event: Lord Rockingham is made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Being a little unfortunate generally in my prophecies and conjectures, I choose to foretell that he will be the most humble, sweet-tempered, generous, and profound Governor that ever that island was blessed with yet.

I forgot to say, that it is not Lord Bristol who commands the fleet, but Admiral Keppel. He is in the Opposition, but they being at leisure, he was appointed.

Arlington Street, Nov. 26.

You will see the particulars of the naval victory in the Gazette. It is not much valued here, as it is thought Carleton must return to Quebec for the winter. The idea of negotiation gains ground—that of war declines, for we hear Grimaldi, the Spanish Minister, has resigned, and he was reckoned no friend of ours; but pray, never mind what I say in the future tense, in which I have no skill at all. We know past times very imperfectly, and how should we, when few know even the present, and they who do, have good reasons for not being communicative? I have lived till I think I know nothing at all.

## LETTER CCLXI.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 1, 1776.

I DON'T know who the Englishwoman is of whom you give so ridiculous a description; but it will suit thousands. I distrust my age continually, and impute to it half the contempt I feel for my countrymen and women. If I think the other half well-founded, it is by considering what must be said hereafter of the present age. What is to impress a great idea of us on posterity? In truth, what do our contemporaries of all other countries think of us? They stare at and condemn our politics and follies; and if they retain any respect for us, I doubt it is for the sense we have had. I do know, indeed, one man who still worships us, but his adoration is testified so very absurdly, as not to do us much credit. It is a Monsieur de Marchais, first Valet-de-Chambre to the King of France. He has the *Anglomanie* so strong, that he has not only read more English than French books, but if any valuable work appears in his own language, he waits to peruse it till it is translated into English; and to be sure our translations of French are admirable things!

To do the rest of the French justice, I mean such as like us, they adopt only our egregious follies, and in particular the flower of them, horse-racing! *Le Roi Pepin*, a racer, is the horse in fashion. I suppose the next shameful practice of ours they naturalize, will be the personal scurrilities in the newspapers, especially

on young and handsome women, in which we certainly are originals! Voltaire, who first brought us into fashion in France, is stark mad at his own success. Out of envy to writers of his own nation, he cried up Shakspeare; and now is distracted at the just encomiums bestowed on that first genius of the world in the new translation. He sent to the French Academy an invective that bears all the marks of passionate dotage. Mrs. Montagu* happened to be present when it was read. Suard, one of their writers, said to her, "Je crois, Madame, que vous êtes un peu fâché de ce que vous venez d'entendre." She replied, "Moi, Monsieur! point du tout! Je ne suis pas amie de Monsieur Voltaire." I shall go to town the day after to-morrow, and will add a postscript, if I hear any news.

Dec. 3rd.

I am come late, have seen nobody, and must send away my letter.

* Mrs. Robinson Montagu, who wrote the defence of Shakspeare against Voltaire.

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